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PMI Provides the Reality Check We All Need These Days

By Joel Smith, PMI Board of Directors President, Kohler Co.



Joel Smith

Wisconsin is a swing state. Information about the contending candidates seems to follow me everywhere I go. Much of it is designed to play into our fears, painting unpleasant scenarios of what life in our nation will be like if the "other" candidate wins.

Whether you believe the campaign messages or not, it's hard to escape from the effect they have on your

psyche. As a remedy, I seek out information that has a basis in scientific fact or objective data. By taking a closer look and not accepting everything I hear or see at face value, I have found that many doomsday scenarios being predicted by partisan media are unlikely to happen because radical moves in either direction are moderated by the resistance they meet.

A lessened likelihood of a worst-case scenario doesn't cause me to become apathetic about elections or our future because I still want the best possible outcome to occur. However, grounding myself in trustworthy information helps me to retain a healthy and positive outlook.

What I have always appreciated about PMI is that we have always been and continue to be grounded in reality. Our advocacy efforts and comments on technical issues have always given PMI members the opportunity to express their concerns and propose solutions relating to various issues facing our industry. PMI's professionalism in this regard has earned our association a high degree of credibility among public officials.

Consider for a minute how PMI responded over the past several years to changes in tariff policies, threats to the Water-Sense program, and proposals in California to make waterefficiency and lead-testing standards more stringent. We did what we always do. We gathered credible data, got ourselves a seat at the table, presented our point of view to decision makers, engaged ourselves in their process, and achieved an acceptable outcome for our industry. Several examples come to mind:

- PMI achieved more than a dozen exclusions on tariffs for its members by working as part of a coalition that also gained extensions on tariff exclusions.
- PMI pushed back against budget proposals to cut the WaterSense program with successful efforts to gain bipartisan support to maintain and continue the program

 and even achieved federal budget authorization for the program!
- In Los Angeles County, PMI engaged and collaborated with county staff to achieve the removal of proposed amendments calling for a 20% reduction in plumbing product flow rates, avoiding disruptions for PMI members.
- PMI worked closely with California state officials to reach a compromise on the effective dates for lead-testing standards that will give PMI members and their allies a reasonable amount of time to sell current inventory and bring products complying with the new standard to the market.
- As the nation began to take precautions to prevent the rapid spread of COVID-19, PMI worked closely with federal, state and local officials to gain an "essential workplace" designation for plumbing manufacturers and keep production lines open.

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Two Wins For Safer Drinking Water Protect Public Health

By Matt Sigler, PMI Technical Director

The quest for

ing water has

more important to our nation.

Assuring there

is safe drinking

water flowing into our schools,

childcare cen-

ters, homes and

safer drink-

never been



Matt Sigler

businesses is crucial for public safety and health.

PMI is supporting two recent developments as part of our long-standing commitment to the reduction of lead in faucets and other endpoint devices used to provide drinking water.

First, we've been an active participant in the rulemaking process initiated in 2017 – engaging with key EPA officials and submitting substantial comments – in support of EPA's final rule on the "Use of Lead Free Pipes, Fittings, Fixtures, Solder, and Flux for Drinking Water."

Second, we've been supporting the proposed tightening of the new NSF 61 (2020) standard, which limits the amount of lead leached during product testing from five micrograms (5 μ g) to one microgram (1 μ g). As a member of the NSF Joint Committee on Drinking Water Additives – System Components, PMI helped establish the new requirements in the NSF 61 standard.

California AB 2060, designed to synch with NSF 61's new 1µg requirement, was a step in the right direction. PMI entered into good faith negotiations in February with the author, Assemblymember **Chris Holden**, and the co-sponsors of the bill, the California Environmental Working Group and the Environmental Defense Fund, to shape the current version of AB 2060. This was a major success story for PMI and our members. We were able to foster a relationship with the environmental community to address an issue of common concern, with the hope of working together on similar issues in the future.

We were also successful in achieving two worthy goals – reducing the level of lead leaching during testing from endpoint devices in accord with the new NSF 61 standard and adding enough time to ramp-up production and certification for manufacturers while allowing distributors, wholesalers and retailers to reduce inventories over a three-year period.

That's one of the reasons we're disappointed that AB 2060 was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee on August 20 and will not move forward this year. It is a feeling we share with Assemblymember Holden and the bill's co-sponsors.

PMI members have long supported reducing lead content in endpoint devices on both the state and national levels. That support included the implementation of CA AB 1953, which was the basis for the Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act of 2011 recently codified by EPA's final rule on the "Use



of Lead Free Pipes, Fittings, Fixtures, Solder, and Flux for Drinking Water."

Whether by using non-lead brasses or by lining waterways to prevent water from coming into direct contact with metal, PMI members have made great strides. PMI members share the goals of AB 2060, and we will begin producing endpoint devices that comply with the upcoming publication of the NSF 61 (2020) standard and continue complying with EPA's final lead free rule.

This deep commitment to public health and safety will help us all achieve the successful outcomes we are all working toward. That's a win-win by any measure.

PMI Provides the Reality Check (Contd.)

Continued from page 1

PMI didn't achieve these outcomes with smoke and mirrors, or with questionable data. We earned these victories the old-fashioned way – with hard work and honest information.

At the virtual PMI20 Manufacturing Success Conference, Nov. 10-12, PMI will continue its tradition of presenting thorough and credible information that will help your company get through 2021 and beyond. PMI's staff and business advisory team are already on it – 24/7! They are continually analyzing issues, mapping strategies, building coalitions, and testifying to legislators and regulators. PMI leverages the full force of our members' talents and insights to do what none of our members can do alone. "All of us" is far better than "any of us."

This issue of Ripple Effect has a full rundown of what we have planned for PMI20. Register today, and let the reality check provided by PMI be your guide.

Ned Dickey Works with PMI to Clarify Codes at Local Level

Current title and employer: Product Compliance Manager, Hansgrohe North America.

Length of time in the plumbing manufacturing industry: Since 1996, 24 years.

My proudest plumbing manufacturing career achievement: While at Moen, my projects maintained less than a 1% return rate for production quality. Our success was due to our commitment to work together as a team, open communication, and equal appreciation of customer expectations, cost, quality, compliance, schedule and delivery.

I started a career in the plumbing manufacturing industry because: I was always interested in engineering. I took a mechanical aptitude test to see if I could qualify for a tool and die program. I scored highly on the test and was offered an all-expenses-paid spot in the program. This enabled me to pay for college, where I earned a bachelor of science in mechanical engineering.

What is your current role in PMI? What do you hope to accomplish in this role? I'm co-chair of the PMI Technical Committee, and I'd like to work on the local jurisdictions and state mandates to get better transparency on codes at the local level. We want to make sure code inspectors understand the local laws when it comes to installation of PMI members' plumbing fixtures.

I vet everything through PMI's Technical Director **Matt Sigler**, who guides our committee. Interpreting codes for our products can get complicated because of the many layers involved – from federal and state legislation to state and county-level amendments.

I'm also working on the PMI task group that focuses on bathroom fixtures and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). One issue we focus on is help-



Ned Dickey

ing inspectors understand the standard for grab bar installation. We often need to clarify the language for them, such as hand grip positions and location of grab bars near the toilet. **Danny Gleiberman**, one of my colleagues on our team, is the grab bar king! He knows all the ins and outs of that issue.

How I promote PMI within my

company: I communicate information gathered from PMI regarding local jurisdiction changes on flow rates to our Hansgrohe teams so they can design our products for sale in all jurisdictions. I communicate to our managers and new products group about California AB 2060 and low-lead standards in plumbing fixtures, so they can keep their fingers on the pulse of those issues.

Our PMI membership delivers the following benefits to my company:

Our membership is well worth the investment! PMI saves me a ton of time by doing the leg work of reviewing and boiling down all pertinent legislation at the federal and state levels.

Best career advice I ever received:

Do your homework. I learned that from one of my managers at Moen. He

would never give me the answer; I had to figure it out on my own. It was a great learning experience.

I'm currently reading: Code books, legislation, local ordinances and the Harvard Business Review, which helps me understand the trends important to our business and leaders.

My favorite movie: "It's a Wonderful Life."

When I face a challenge at work

(or in life): I want to understand the problem, the people involved, and their agendas and deliverables. Then, I encourage learning from any mistakes and resolving the issue together as a team.

In my spare time, I enjoy: Coaching baseball, volleyball and basketball. I coached my son **Eric**, now 19, in baseball and basketball. The best compliment was that people couldn't tell who my son was because I treated him like everyone else on the team. I also like to play golf in between my wife's honey-do lists! **Angel** and I have been married for 26 years.

Upcoming Tech Talk Calls

The Technical Committee welcomes employees of all PMI member organizations to participate on the Tech Talks calls, led by PMI Technical Director **Matt Sigler**.

The next calls are scheduled for Sept. 9 and Sept. 23 at 10 a.m. Central Time.

If you would like to participate on Tech Talk conference calls, update your member profile or contact PMI's Association Manager **Jodi Stuhrberg**, at 847-481-5500 ext. 107, or via email at jstuhrberg@ safeplumbing.org.

PMI20 Agenda: A Virtual Guide to Manufacturing Success

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

With registration now open, the virtual PMI20 Manufacturing Success Conference, Nov. 10-12, promises to be a digital experience filled with three days of memberfocused, content-rich insight. Moving from San Diego and coming to a computer or tablet screen near you, PMI20 will be remote physically, but not in spirit!

Despite being unable to physically get together, PMI members should not expect anything less than a PMI Conference's typical action-packed and valuable agenda. This special event will inform, engage and enlighten you while keeping you safe. You can participate in PMI20's exciting professional development opportunities for just a few hours a day while simultaneously staying on top of your typical work and life responsibilities.

Tuesday Nov. 10: Time commitment - 2 to 4 p.m. CT

Opening remarks will be given by PMI Board of Directors President **Joel Smith** and CEO/Executive Director **Kerry Stackpole**. Following their welcome to PMI members and other attendees, the PMI20 keynote presentation will be given by **Rachel Hanfling**, an Emmy-nominated producer of **Oprah** and **Anderson Cooper**. She will present on the language of leadership (see sidebar). Following a quick break, the first day will wrap up with an Election/Political Update from **Jim Ellis** of Ellis Insight; he is a 35-year veteran of politics at the state and national levels.

Wednesday Nov. 11: Time commitment: 2 to 4:30 p.m. CT

The day will begin with trade updates given by Crowell & Moring colleagues **David Stepp**, partner; **Evan Y. Chuck**, partner; and **Robert Clifton Burns**, senior counsel. The law firm provides multinational companies with strategic advice on global customs and international trade compliance matters including export controls, economic sanctions, customs, and security issues.

Next up, **Dr. Andrew Persily**, chief of the Energy and Environment Division at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), will provide advice on "Identifying Key Research Needs for Premise Plumbing." Dr. Persily has performed research into indoor air quality and ventilation since the late 1970s and has worked to develop and apply measurement techniques to evaluate airflows in a variety of building types.

Closing up day two of PMI20 will be **Dr. Steven Buchberger**, professor, University of Cincinnati. He will discuss "Hunter's Curve Meets March Madness: Estimating Peak Demands in Premise Plumbing Systems." Dr. Buchberger's teaching interests include surface water hydrology, water quality modeling, and reliability analysis in engineering design.



Interactive Keynote Session to Focus On Leadership & Communications



Rachel Hanfling

The COVID-10 pandemic has created many new challenges, including how to effectively lead and communicate with a workforce that can no longer be in the same room with you.

"In remote working situations, we lack the traditional non-verbal cues that are so important to effective communications," said PMI CEO/Executive Director **Kerry Stackpole**. "We now can only communicate with voice and video."

As a TV producer, PMI20 keynote speaker **Rachel Hanfling** has experience preparing both media hosts and their guests to be effective communicators on the audio-visual medium. She will bring her advice and a willingness to be interactive with her audience to the conference, as well as to the Dec. 1 PMI Aspiring Leaders Program, which she will moderate. She will walk attendees through her six-step process: listening, unique messaging, practice, delivery, reaping rewards, and setting new goals.

The PMI20 team is gathering input from members about challenges they are facing that effective communication can help solve. If you have a challenge you'd like Rachel to address during her keynote session, let the PMI team know ASAP!

PMI20 Agenda: A Virtual Guide to Manufacturing Success

Thursday Nov. 12: Time commitment – 2 to 5 p.m. CT

On the final day of PMI20, a conversation about "COVID-19 and the New Norm" will occur between market researcher **Brad Farnsworth**, president of The Farnsworth Group, remote work strategist and advocate **Laurel Farrer**, and co-chair of the Littler Workplace Safety and Health (OSHA/MSHA) Practice Group **Brad Hammock**. This session will be moderated by **Ashlei Williams**, editor of Plumbing Engineer and chief marketing officer of PHCP Pros.

After the panel presentation, **Dr. Steven Soifer**, professor, University of Mississippi, will present about the "Conditions of Public Restrooms in Light of COVID-19." Dr. Soifer is also the co-founder and former CEO of the International Paruresis Association and president of the American Restroom Association. "Assessing the Impact of Silver in Shower Heads on Opportunistic Pathogen Abundance and Resistance," the final presentation of PMI20, will be delivered by **Dr. Leanne M. Gilbertson** of the University of Pittsburgh. Gilbertson's primary research interests include environmental engineering, life cycle assessment, sustainable material design and sustainable nanotechnology.

The closing of PMI20 will feature the NASA Lunar Loo Challenge – a contest to seek new designs for a toilet that will



work in microgravity and lunar gravity – along with a virtual happy hour! **Steve Rader**, deputy manager of NASA's Center of Excellence for Collaborative Innovation, and HeroX CEO **Christian Cotichini** will talk about this fun and interesting contest.

PMI20's concise presentations will be designed to gain and sustain your attention. The latest virtual technology will deliver visual interest and opportunities to engage in real time with speakers and fellow members.

PMI20 will stay true to our vision - safe, responsible plumbing - always - while giving it new meaning during these challenging times.

Register for PMI20 today! safeplumbing.org/pmi20

Sponsorship In the Virtual Space Brings Even More Value

The virtual nature of PMI20 will not reduce sponsorship opportunities to organizations wishing to get their messages across to decision-makers in the plumbing manufacturing industry.

Sponsorship messages will have more impact for your buck because conference participants will be focused on their screens throughout the entire event. The visibility you gain will continue beyond PMI20 as attendees access materials post-conference. And you won't have the typical exhibiting costs such as furnishings, marketing materials, and staff time.

Platinum, Gold, Silver and Event sponsorships are available. The Platinum, Gold and Silver sponsorships come with one or more complimentary PMI20 registrations, and the Event sponsorships are each limited to one sponsor only.

Learn more about the benefits of sponsorship by downloading the PMI20 sponsorship brochure: <u>tinyurl.com/</u> <u>y4jmou67</u>



EPA Considers PMI Input in Finalizing Lead Reduction Rule

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

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced on July 29 its final rule on the "Use of Lead Free Pipes, Fittings, Fixtures, Solder, and Flux for Drinking Water."

PMI's comments to the EPA about the new rule were shaped by input received from PMI's Technical and Advocacy/ Government Affairs Committees. PMI has been an active participant in the rulemaking process since it was initiated in 2017, making a presentation at an EPA public meeting, engaging with key EPA officials and submitting comments for consideration. EPA considered several of PMI's formal comments in the final rule.

The rule codifies the changes made to the Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act (RLDWA) of 2011 that took effect on Jan. 4, 2014. The rule modifies the RLDWA by incorporating new definitions and certification requirements, and clarifies which products are exempt from the RLDWA. However, there are no major changes to the process in which PMI members currently certify their products to meet the requirements of the RLDWA.

Changes and clarifications beneficial to PMI members

The final rule contains several changes and clarifications that are important to PMI members; these revisions involve marking and labeling, exclusions from the certification requirement, noncompliance and enforcement, and direct replacement parts. For example, consistent with PMI comments, the rule does not require the marking and labeling of products that must meet the lead-free requirements.

PMI supported this specific provision in its meetings and comments to EPA: direct replacement parts for previously installed lead-free certified products do not need to be individually certified if the weighted average lead content of the wetted surface area for the part does not exceed the weighted average lead content of the original part.

Another important change to the rule now requires products meeting the lead-free requirements to be certified by an accredited third-party certification body - starting three years after the final rule is published in the Federal Register. "American plumbing manufacturers already certify their products with thirdparty certification bodies as required by U.S. plumbing codes," said PMI Technical Director Matt Sigler. "Products arriving from outside of the U.S. will now be held to the same requirements as those produced by U.S. manufacturers by way of the enforcement provisions in the final rule."

In addition, the final rule added several new definitions, including accredited third-party certification body, coating, fitting, fixture, plumbing fitting, potable uses, non-potable services, liner and manufacturer. The definition for "lead free" has been expanded to include drinking water coolers, drinking water fountains, drinking water bottle fillers, plumbed-in devices and water heaters, and several elements, such as liners, that are manufactured into a pipe, fitting or fixture, as well as coatings that are applied to the internal surfaces of a pipe, fitting or fixture component.

PMI's advocacy for lead reduction dates back more than a decade

PMI advocated for the nationwide RLDWA in 2010, which reduced the amount of lead content allowed in



drinking water pipes, pipe fittings, and plumbing fixtures nationwide. A national harmonized standard provided plumbing manufacturers with the regulatory certainty needed to provide low-lead plumbing products across the country. PMI members successfully transitioned their plumbing products to meet the RLDWA nationwide by Jan. 4, 2014.

The new technical rule will go into effect 30 days after it is published in the Federal Register. PMI urges its members to review the Pre-Publication Notice of the Final Rule on the EPA's website (tinyurl.com/y3v6z6d3). The EPA also has published "Questions and Answers About the Final Lead Free Rule" (tinyurl.com/yyvsf77n) and continues to promote its brochure: "How to Identify Lead Free Certification Marks for Drinking Water System & Plumbing Products." (/tinyurl.com/ybeja9c4)

For additional information, contact **Stephanie Salmon**, PMI's Washington representative, at <u>ssalmondc@gmail</u>. com, or **Matt Sigler**, PMI's technical director, at <u>msigler@safeplumbing.org</u>.

Military Vets Bring Valuable Traits to Manufacturers

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

Disciplined. Resourceful. Goal-oriented. Those are only a few of the many traits military veterans possess that can help plumbing manufacturers succeed.

Another important reason for manufacturers to tap the military for talent? With a shortage of skilled workers projected to confront manufacturing companies in the next several years, the competition for skilled labor will increase. Deloitte and the Manufacturing Institute have reported that between 2018 and 2028, manufacturers will need to fill more than 4.6 million jobs because of retirements and new jobs caused by natural growth.

Some PMI members, including Kohler Co., have created programs to recruit military veterans and, in turn, have realized the many benefits those workers bring to the manufacturing floor and beyond.

Versatile veterans perform well

Research has shown that military veterans perform well in a variety of roles and situations. They have been trained to deal with uncertainty and challenging conditions while being masters at goal-setting and problem-solving. A 2018 Orion Talent Veteran Hiring Survey identified some of the top reasons businesses hire veterans, including their excellent qualifications, composure, productivity, skills and leadership.

Veterans' experiences sync well with the needs of plumbing manufacturers, too. "Almost every service member has obtained skills which make them valuable in the manufacturing environment," said **Adam Guenther**, Leadership Talent Pool manager at Kohler and vice president of the Kohler Alliance for Veterans and Supporters (KAVS). He added that some military roles fit naturally into plumbing manufacturing. For example, naval machinist's mates, who help operate and maintain Navy ships and submarines, and Seabees, who make up the U.S. Naval Construction Battalions, offer valuable plumbing and engineering experience.

"Veterans bring so many positive qualities to their work. They are adept at working in teams, are among the most highly skilled individuals at their peer level, are trained leaders, are used to working hard and are dedicated to the collective cause," Guenther stated.

Kohler created KAVS about two years ago, focusing on continued service to veterans and the community and how to create value for Kohler. KAVS' emphasis on veteran recruiting has centered on educating the company's human resources and hiring managers on the advantages and needs of veteran hiring; participating in hiring conferences; and partnering with National Veterans Transition Services, Inc., in its REBOOT initiative to help separating servicepeople adapt to the civilian world and find employment.

Connecting manufacturers with military talent

Many resources exist to help manufacturers recruit and hire military personnel. The Manufacturing Institute, the National Association of Manufacturers' (NAM) workforce and education partner, offers the Heroes MAKE America program (tinyurl.com/y3gkpzzc), linking manufacturers with qualified candidates. The program also provides transitioning service members with manufacturing-related training and support, delivering a pipeline of prepared talent ready to hit the ground running.

A recent article on the NAM's website discussed how manufacturing is an obvious choice for veterans (<u>tinyurl.com/</u> <u>yxm9umr2</u>) and provided a first-hand account from a Heroes MAKE America



program participant, **Dan Mitchell**. In the Army, Mitchell worked in maintenance at industrial facilities, managed safety and operations, and tracked heavy vehicles and armored units. He attributed the lessons he learned from his work in the Army as instrumental toward his success in his next career as a production supervisor in manufacturing.

Because of COVID-19, the Manufacturing Institute also recently launched Heroes Connect: Military to Manufacturing to replace in-person facility tours for Heroes MAKE America students. The program allows individual manufacturers to provide a company overview, information about their veteran-friendly culture, and a current list of career opportunities. Manufacturers also can conduct video conversations with participants. Plumbing manufacturers can sign up for the program on the institute's website (tinyurl.com/ yxam6cxu).

Other resources for businesses looking to recruit military veterans include the Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) (dol. gov/agencies/vets/hire) and veterans. gov; the Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes initiative (uschamberfoundation.org/hiring-ourheroes); and military.com's veteran hiring employer resource center (military. com/hiring-veterans).

Engage in Upcoming PMI Virtual Webinars and Meetings!

In addition to the PMI20 Manufacturing Success Conference, PMI is offering an exciting slate of interesting and valuable webinars for members between now and the end of the year. Here are more opportunities to engage with fellow PMI members to learn about the challenges and opportunities of our times.

Sept. 24: "Looking Past the Fear and the Noise: 2020-2022." Alex Chausovsky of ITR Economics will provide an economic analysis and forecast on the heels of the 3rd quarter 2020 PMI Market Outlook – an exclusive benefit of PMI membership. Never has it been more critical for decision makers to have a clear, impartial and data-driven perspective of how COVID-19 and its impact on the economy will affect companies moving forward. This session will help you determine the best course of action for the most important part of the economy – you and your business. Chausovsky will:



Alex Chausovsky

- Discuss leading indicators proven to signal cyclical turns in the economy and markets.
- Present the outlook for the market segments most important to your industry.
- Provide you with the "stakes in the ground" for the economic recovery.

Oct. 13: "Critical Skills for Remote Work Success." Laurel Farrer will discuss trends and challenges relating to remote working. Farrer will provide advice on how to avoid common pitfalls in remote work, and share how to be successful long term with eight key skills for remote work success. Attendees will walk away with an understanding of how to leverage and improve these skills to thrive in a remote environment.

Nov. 19: PMI's General Membership Meeting. This annual gathering will feature addresses from PMI Board of Directors President Joel Smith and PMI CEO/Executive Director Kerry Stackpole; the elections of the new board president, board members and committee co-chairs; a financial report; awards and recognitions to outstanding members; and more!

Dec 1: PMI Aspiring Leaders Program. PMI20 keynote speaker **Rachel Hanfling** will moderate a meeting of PMI's up-and-coming leaders. To be focused on developing communication skills that help you get ahead, this one-of-a-kind, innovative training opportunity inspires creativity and innovation among your top talent. Nominate your high-potential employees today for this outstanding leadership development opportunity. This two-hour program will inspire the ability to see and think differently, foster self-awareness, and instill a growth mindset.



2020 PMI LEADERSHIP

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