



THE PIPELINE

News and Information about the Eastern Massachusetts Plumbing Industry • Spring, 2004

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Organizing from the top down



John Stack, the Local's Organizer. "It's all about the education," says John Stack, United Association Local 12's new Organizer. While the assumption might be that he's referring to the information he provides to non-union plumbers as part of his efforts to enlist them into the Local, Stack is actually talking about the info he makes available to plumbing and mechanical contracting company

owners. It's not that he doesn't meet with non-affiliated plumbers; it's that Stack focuses more of his time on the management side of the labor-management relationship, because those efforts have the potential to reap bigger dividends for all parties: the local, its members, the contractors, and the industry at large. It's what Stack calls his "top-down organizing approach."

Stack, who was appointed to the new position last September by Local 12 Business Manager Kevin Cotter, has met with about 25 contractors so far. He says that there is some apprehension, a lot of misinformation, and a fair amount of pre-conceived notions about the Union among the owners. In a few cases, the foregone conclusions prevent him from

even getting in the door. But when he is able to sit down and talk, Stack says that he's often able to break down barriers and communicate the Local's powerful messages. Negotiations are ongoing among several contractors. To date, six new companies have signed on with Local 12 as a result of Stack's efforts.

Among the points he emphasizes when he meets with contractors are the Local's comprehensive training program and the high cal-
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New England's largest plumbing job is a wrap

— MetroWest water supply tunnel opens

The Plumbing Heating and Cooling Contractors of Greater Boston are integral players on the region's largest projects. From Boston's new convention center to the Big Dig, Local 12 craftspeople are on the front lines. But the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority's (MWRA) MetroWest Tunnel, part of its new water transmission and
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To date, six new companies have signed on with Local 12 as a result of Stack's efforts.

The focus on service and quality has been P. J. Kennedy's guiding principle since 1920.

Family business grows, but clings to traditions

Rollins Place, a new facility with about 200 luxury condominium units, was a recent high-profile project for **P. J. Kennedy & Sons**. Representing over \$6 million in plumbing, HVAC, and controls, the project typifies the kind of work in which the company engages as one of the region's leading plumbing, heating, and cooling contractors. In a way, however, the project also took the company full circle to its humble beginnings.

Located in Boston's South End, the city block-long Rollins Place is a stone's throw from the site of the small shop that housed P.J. Kennedy when it opened its doors in 1920. Back then, Patrick Kennedy and his uncle, Dennis

O'Grady, offered plumbing and gasfitting services to the residents of Beacon Hill and the South End. When he was 14 years old, Paul Kennedy joined his father in the business. Now P. J. Kennedy's president, Paul said that going to the South End work site brought him back to the days when he "...put away fittings, answered the phones, and did some apprentice work—a little of everything," with his dad.

Under his watch, the company now works mostly on commercial projects and the focus has changed to HVAC and controls as well as plumbing. Other projects on which P. J. Kennedy has worked are a chilled water plant in the control tower at Logan Airport
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Workers navigate through a section of the newly constructed 17.6-mile MetroWest Tunnel.



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MetroWest Tunnel taps into new water conduit

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treatment system, is the mother of all plumbing projects.

When it opened in November 2003, the 17.6-mile long, 14-foot wide tunnel represented 7 years of construction, \$665 million in costs, and an investment of 6 million labor-hours. Nearly 2000 people, including Local 12 members, worked on the project. Tunnel work proceeded 24 hours per day on 3 shifts, 5 to 6 days per week, with no fatalities. The project focused on 5 primary shafts in Marlborough, Southborough, Framingham, and two in Weston. The MWRA finished on time and well below its \$728 million budget.

Local 12 Business Agent

George Donahue visited the tunnel as it was being built and dubbed it an "historic project." He says that traveling 300 feet underground on an elevator to reach the work site was like going on a theme park ride.



Serving 39 communities in the Metro Boston and MetroWest regions, the project was a logistical challenge of epic proportions. Yet, the 2.3 million people who rely on the tunnel for their water probably didn't notice a thing when the MWRA switched open the valve. And that's as it should be.

As they do every day, people filled their drinking glasses, took showers, and flushed their toilets without any pressure fluctuations or discolored water problems. Behind the scenes, however, up to 450 million gallons of water per day began flowing 200 to 450 feet underground.

The MetroWest Tunnel essentially replaces the aging, leaking, and vulnerable Hultman Aque-

duct as the region's water lifeline. A surface aqueduct running continuously since the early 1940s, the Hultman will get an overhaul and then become a backup to the new tunnel.

More work in the pipeline

In addition to the tunnel, the MWRA opened two of three cells that comprise the new 115 million gallon Norumbega Covered Storage Tank along the Mass Pike in Weston. Meanwhile, the agency is using the old Wachusett aqueduct to move water from the Wachusett Reservoir down to the Marlborough area where the tunnel starts. That allows the MWRA to take the Cosgrove Tunnel off-line over the winter months so that it

can connect the new tunnel to the Walnut Hill Water Treatment Plant under construction in Marlborough.

Phase 2 of the new system will take place

this spring when the MWRA connects the Cosgrove Tunnel and turns on the third Norumbega tank cell. Phase 3 will begin when the Walnut Hill treatment plant starts providing treated water in early 2005 using ozone gas as the primary disinfectant instead of chlorine.

The tunnel is the backbone of MWRA's \$1.7 billion Integrated Water Supply Improvement Program. This multi-faceted program, which includes water transmission, treatment, and storage, represents the biggest investment in New England's largest water system since the building of the Quabbin Reservoir during the Great Depression.

Thanks to the MWRA for supplying the photos.

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Local 12 SCHOLARSHIP recipient Amanda Turner is presented her check by Business Manager Kevin Cotter and Funds Administrator Roger Gill. She is shown with her father, Local 12 member Dan Turner, along with her mother and brother. The union presented a total of \$15,000 in scholarships to recipients, including Natasha Leary, Megan Davis, Nicole Williams, Christopher Ahl, and Denis McElligot. The 2004 scholarships will be given later this year.

He is an organized guy

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iber of the workforce to which they would have immediate access. "The ready pool of highly skilled workers is key," Stack says. "We have a saying about how we 'do it right the first time.' That means a lot to owners—and their clients."

Stack also touts the Local's benefits program. Pensions, annuities, and, especially, health care, are critical issues for all employers and employees these days. With Local 12 and contractor representatives jointly managing the benefits program, that takes the burden off of the contractor.

Tunnel Crews

Nearly 2000 people worked on the historic MetroWest Tunnel. The Local 12 signatory contractors that participated in the project included:

- William M. Collins Co., Inc.
- Harding and Smith, Inc.
- Interstate Engineering Corp.
- Kennedy Mechanical, Inc.
- P. J. Riley & Co., Inc.
- Total Mechanical Service Corp.

Like father, like son

Stack knows first-hand what a fair wage and a solid benefits program can mean to a family. His father, John Stack, Sr., was a Local 12 plumber. "I grew up with it," he says. "I know what it means to have health insurance." Now that his father is retired, Stack is able to see the real-world benefits of a pension and annuity in action.

Stack himself started his apprenticeship with Local 12 in 1989. He worked for many contractors as a Journeyman Plumber. From the start, Stack got involved with the Union and served on a number of its committees.

While he says the hours are longer and the work is quite different, Stack is enjoying his new position and the difference he's able to make as a result of his efforts. He adds that organizing is really a team effort and that he works closely with Local 12's business agents.

"The Union *can* compete, if given the opportunity. We just want a fair chance," he says. "We want a level playing field. That's what keeps everything competitive...and keeps everybody working."

P. J. Kennedy & Sons, Inc.

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and the boiler plant at the McCormack Middle School in Dorchester.

Soup-to-nuts service

Paul works with his brother and partner, Jim Kennedy. Another brother, John, serves as vice president of operations and estimating. Paul's son, Paul Jr., and his nephew, Patrick Kennedy, represent the next evolution of the company and are incorporating more design-build, engineering, and other services into the mix. Despite the growth and diversification, Paul says the focus on service and quality has been the company's guiding principle since 1920. "Each generation brings its own stamp," he says. "But it's the longstanding traditions and focus on service that have brought the company to where it is today."

And where it is today is a full-service mechanical contracting business. From design to plumbing to HVAC to automatic temperature controls to service, Paul says that P. J. Kennedy handles the entire project, "from soup to nuts." The company is one of two in the state licensed by Honeywell as one of its Autho-



PAUL KENNEDY, president of P. J. Kennedy & Sons, Inc.

Authorized Controls Integrators.

A Local 12 signatory contractor since 1986, Paul credits the affiliation as one of the primary reasons for the company's success. "We always have labor when we need it," he explains. "And the workers are well-trained. I believe it's the people that make the business." Paul says that he treats his mechanics fairly, and that Local 12 treats them fairly as well. This, in turn, leads to a stable work force and good work ethics.

"We pride ourselves in building lifelong relationships with our customers by offering what we believe is the very best service," says Paul. "We can do that because we are union."

Massive Logan 2000 project continues

It may be called "Logan 2000," but the work that will radically transform the bustling airport continues into 2004 and beyond. And, as with every major area construction project, Local 12 members and the Plumbing Heating Cooling Contractors of Greater Boston are playing an important role.

With an all-new Terminal E nearly finished, a new Terminal A on the boards, and significant work being done in all of the other terminals, Business Agent Jack McGinness says that it has been a logistical challenge keeping the airport functioning amid

all of the construction. Other pieces of the Logan 2000 project include a new T station, new parking garage, and reconfigured roadways to tie into the Ted Williams Tunnel. "It's an enormous undertaking," says McGinness. "We're talking about billions of dollars and hundreds and hundreds of plumbers."

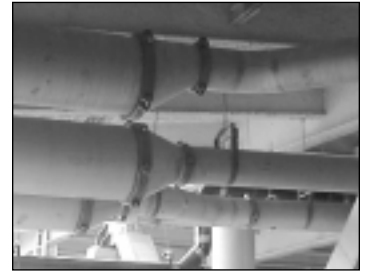
Every one of the plumbers, and all of the people working at Logan, go through an extensive security check. After the events of 9/11, the program includes background checks, drug testing, badges, and a daily security check.

Under and above the Boston Convention Center

There is an underground system with over 600 boxes beneath the 516,000-square-foot exhibit hall at the Boston Convention Center slated to open this spring. Hidden along with the boxes are about 10 miles of subterranean air, water, and drainage piping. Handling the installation of this vast, convoluted network of indirect conduits is J. C. Higgins Corp. of Stoughton. John O'Leary, Higgins' vice president, shared other intriguing info about the construction challenges the company has faced working on New England's largest building.

Offering a total of 1.7 million square feet of meeting and exhibit space, the center will catapult Boston into the major leagues for conventions. One of the contractors working on the massive project, Higgins is responsible for installing all of the above- and below-ground plumbing. While the underground work is impressive, the roof drainage system is the first of its kind in North America.

Because of the roof's enormous size and the huge volume of rainwater that will need to be diverted, the convention center's designers specified a syphonic drainage system. Used in Europe and Asia, the system incorpo-



The diameters of the small syphonic pipes increases where the branches tie into the main drains.

rates baffles and small 2.5-inch pipes to eject water at very high pressure. Syphonic systems can flow up to thirty feet per second compared to the three feet per second that conventional drainage systems typically flow. Another advantage of the passive system is that the pipes require no pitch and run flat along the roof. The roof water will collect in an underground holding tank and empty into Boston Harbor.

According to O'Leary, the installers used Victaulic stainless steel piping for the roof drains. Even though the Higgins crew had experience working with the material, Local 12's training center re-certified them for documentation and quality control.

Other signatory contractors working on the convention center include J. F. Shine Mechanical, Inc. of West Roxbury and J. C. Cannistraro, Inc. of Watertown. Despite the more than 1000 design modifications received by the general contractor, O'Leary says that no scheduled end dates have been affected. He credits the harmonious working relationship and the project-labor agreement for keeping the huge project on track.

Coincidentally, the National PHCC convention and ISH trade show will be one of the convention center's first major events. The ISH event is North America's largest plumbing and heating trade show.

Thanks to J. C. Higgins for supplying the photos.



A Local 12 technician from Drain Shooters tests a syphonic drain on the roof of the convention center by inserting a video camera into it. Note the small 2.5-inch pipe size.



Local 12 members have been piping and welding the MBTA's new liquefied natural gas fueling stations.

Plumbers help build different kind of "gas stations" for MBTA

You have probably heard of the MBTA's new Silver Line bus service. You may also have heard about the transit authority's program to convert the Silver Line fleet and some of its other buses from diesel fuel to natural gas. What you may not have heard is that Local 12 members have been busy building the piping and doing the welding work at the MBTA's liquid natural gas fueling stations now under construction.

According to Business Agent Jack McGinness, the work is very intense. In order to change the gas into a liquid state, the stations need to compress it at 4500 pounds. "We need to test it to 6700 pounds," McGinness explains. "To put this in perspective, the gas coming into a house

is typically under one-half pound of pressure. As you can imagine, the welding specs are extremely critical, and the welding certification standards are very high."

Working during the extreme cold this winter has been a challenge, McGinness adds. It's important to maintain heat for the welds. Plastic canopies cover and protect the work sites, and portable heaters help maintain the temperature.

Fueling operations are expected to begin this summer. The MBTA says that it plans to initially convert about 250 of its buses to natural gas and expand the program so that more of its fleet can use the environmentally friendly fuel.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Commission exploring bid laws

In the last issue of *The Pipeline*, we informed you about Governor Romney's plans to do away with the filed sub-bid law. Thanks to your efforts and the combined voices of those who spoke out against it, the bill did not pass the legislature in its original form.

However, state lawmakers did draft an amendment that established a commission to study all bid laws. Members of the commission represent both those in favor of the current bid laws and those that want to make changes. They include representatives from the legislature, Associated Subcontractors of MA, Associated General Contractors, the Inspector General's office, Mass. State Building Trades, and the Mass. AFL-CIO.

Plumbers Local 12 Business

Manager Kevin Cotter and Plumbing Heating Cooling Contractors of Greater Boston Executive Director Hugh Kelleher testified to the commission on the importance of maintaining the filed sub-bid law. The commission is due to make a report to the legislature in early 2004.

In other legislative news, there are two pending bills of importance to the industry: House Bill 549, which would require continuing education for journeyman plumbers (Local 12 members already participate in continuing education as a condition of their membership), and Senate Bill 422, which would levy enhanced fines against anyone working in the plumbing industry without a license. We will update you about these and other legislative developments.



Local 12 installed its 2004 officers at a ceremony in January.



Congressman Stephen Lynch addressed the audience at the 2004 installation of Local 12's officers. Other special guests at the event included Joseph Dart, President of the Massachusetts State Building Trades Council, and Hugh Kelleher, Executive Director of the PHCC of Greater Boston.

WELCOME

We are pleased to welcome the following signatory contractors

Amari Company, Inc.
Corporate Mechanical, Inc.
Lumus Construction, Inc.
A.J. Lynne, Ltd.
Pila's Plumbing
T. Sullivan Mechanical
Vortex Piping, Inc.

Amherst, NH
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Abington
Hampstead, NH
Hanover
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