



The Macomb Pipeline

Volume 2, Issue 2

The Macomb Group is a leading wholesale distributor of pipe, valves, and fittings (PVF), with multiple locations in Michigan, Ohio, Tennessee, and Kentucky. We are presently ranked in the "Top 10" nationally as a distributor of PVF, and a leading PVF participant in our geographic market. We service a diverse mix of end markets, including automotive (OEM's and suppliers), food and beverage, general manufacturing, hospitals, schools and universities, pharmaceuticals, utilities, power plants, steel, pulp and paper, refineries, and general industry.



Success Story

Boost Your Bottom Line by Bringing Energy Costs Down

When energy costs soar, it's time to call The Macomb Group. That's just what an Alma College Energy Engineer did, and the subsequent upgrades save his organization \$90,000 annually. (Page 2)



Macomb News

Our Melting Pot of Experts Grows Our Business *and* Yours

Growing a company isn't just about products and market share. It's primarily about having the people who can truly bring value to customers. The Macomb Group's experienced team is ready to deliver exceptional service and solutions. (Page 4)



Solution Spotlight

Defeat Dirty Filters Once and for All

Don't wash your dollars down the drain by dealing with dirty filters. DTE Energy employs John Deere Greentech self-cleaning filters to save maintenance man-hours and increase efficiency. (Page 6)



Did You Know

Energy Is Money; Do You Want to Save It or Burn It?

Would you rather burn \$100 bills or keep them in your pocket? It's your call. An energy audit can help you keep your business from going up in smoke. (Page 8)



Chuck's Quick Tip

Find the Perfect Gasket for Safety's Sake

Gaskets aren't top of mind for most pipe system designers. But installing the wrong gasket can be a disaster. Prevent problems by incorporating the right gasket into your pipe system design from the beginning! (Page 10)



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Success Story

Boost Your Bottom Line by Bringing Energy Costs Down

Alma College has replaced 45 circulating pumps in its boiler heating system, saving approximately \$90,000 in energy costs per year.

The turnaround was led by Alma College Energy Engineer Brandon Smith. Brandon didn't have a background in energy when he started his position at the college, which turned out to be an enormous advantage. As he examined the college's energy system, he broke all the rules, bringing in a fresh approach to facilities management. He started by utilizing the Macomb Energy Resource Integration Team (M.E.R.I.T.) (www.macombgroup.com/green-initiative) to identify potential system savings. M.E.R.I.T. took a whole system approach to analyzing how the college could reduce energy costs — and the findings were significant.



The Macomb Group replaced the circulating pumps in Alma College's boiler system with ECM-controlled Wilo Stratus pumps.

ECM: Cutting-edge technology for lowering *total* costs

"We're looking at things from a system perspective instead of a component perspective," says Jeff Turner of Systecore, one of The Macomb Group's M.E.R.I.T. energy analysis partners. "Pump people want to sell bigger pumps, boiler people want to sell bigger boilers. We stand back and look at system conditions. We emphasize your energy footprint — the cost per square foot for energy use."

And just how significant are Alma College's system changes? "Alma College is now down to 93 cents a square foot. It's impressive," says Jeff.

The Macomb Group determined that energy costs could be greatly reduced if the college replaced the circulating pumps in its boiler system with an ECM-controlled Wilo Stratus pump. Most pumps in boiler systems run at one set speed; ECM technology enables the pump to run at variable speeds determined by the pressure inside the system, which changes based on the outside temperature. This solution allows the college to use only the energy it needs rather than continually operating at full blast.

"When you let a boiler system run wide open with a higher flow than it needs, you're wasting a lot of energy," explains Mike Boyd, principal at The Macomb Group. "To ensure the system functions properly, you want to slow the flow so all the heat from the boiler can get into the water, then the heat in the water can get to where you're using it. If it's flowing too fast, the heat goes right past where you want to use it. It goes up the stack to Mother Nature and the atmosphere."

The Wilo pump uses an advanced electrical technology that was developed in Europe nearly 20 years ago but was only recently introduced in the United States. The pump draws standard A/C power, and then converts the current to D/C power. D/C is far more efficient than A/C power, but it isn't available as a standard because it doesn't travel far without losing its voltage.

“Converting from A/C power to D/C power internally makes the pump 50% more efficient than it would be if it were running directly on A/C power,” Boyd says.

Savings that just keep adding up

Less energy output equates to less financial output.

For Brandon, the choice to begin the pump conversions at Alma College was a no-brainer. His implementation is an example of the kind of changes that can happen when organizations are willing to look outside the typical recommendations for energy savings.

“In most installations, organizations look for more efficient equipment, but equipment doesn’t work in isolation,” Jeff says. “To get real energy and cost savings today, you need to go further and address the function of the entire system. Organizations like Alma College are going to the next level, and Macomb can help them get there.”

The Macomb Group (www.macombgroup.com) works with customers and contractors to optimize the systems you rely on. Learn how our M.E.R.I.T. consultants can provide the energy-saving solutions you are looking for. Contact us by email at info@macombgroup.com or by phone at 888-756-4110.



Macomb News

Our Melting Pot of Experts Grows Our Business *and* Yours

In 1977, The Macomb Group operated a pipe supply business out of a single facility. Today, we are a Top 10 Industrial Pipe, Valve, and Fitting (PVF) supplier with 15 stocking locations, and a 375,000 square-foot corporate headquarters that sits on 26 acres with a rail line. When Bill McGivern, Keith Schatko, and Doug Howe bought the company in 1991, our revenue was \$1 million. Today, yearly sales are nearly \$150 million. Many of our vendors wonder, “How has The Macomb Group continued to grow while the others have failed or reduced their size?”



One of the main things we point to is our people. In 1991, Bill, Keith, and Doug had a plan: They wanted The Macomb Group to be known for its *superior customer service*. With that as a starting point, everything else fell into place.

Bringing in the best and brightest

Today, The Macomb Group is a wonderful melting pot of industrial PVF talent, and many of our experts have come to us from previous leaders in the industry. Through the years, The Macomb Group has acquired markets and talented employees from one-time industrial supply giants such as MIPSCO, WT Andrew, Coon-DeVisser, US Flow/Bertsch Company, Harrison Supply, and Hardy Disinger.

We employ the cream of the crop; our experts have grown up in this industry and have paid their dues time and time again. Many have expanded their talents with The Macomb Group and are now Sales Managers, Branch Managers, Regional Managers, Warehouse Managers, or Specialty Division Leaders. We have people with more than 40 years' experience — in fact, we have a combined average of 25 years of experience in our inside/outside sales teams alone. All of our employees help to make The Macomb Group the best PVF supplier in the industry.

Putting talent to work for customers — any job, any time

Our operational growth also means that we have grown the products and services we offer to our customers. The continued commitment to “superior customer service” has served the company well, and current customers come to The Macomb Group because we have the knowledge to help them with their projects.

Whether customers come to us for pressure and temperature information for pipe, valves, fittings, or they need help sizing a hose assembly or automated valve package, The Macomb Group's sales team can help. Our specialty divisions help with anything relating to fire fabrication piping; AWWA pipe and fittings; metal and rubber hose assemblies; petroleum piping products; and automated valve packages and instrumentation products. (An extensive list of our products and services can be seen here (www.macombgroup.com).)

Our commitment to service extends to after regular business hours; our employees are ready to take care of customers for after-hours emergencies and product support. The emergency service portion of our business has grown from 1-2 times a month to almost 2-3 times on a weekend and sometimes more.

Regardless of when our customers need us, The Macomb Group will respond to their calls. We receive emergency calls on holidays and weekends, when the customer can't find anyone else to answer the phone.

Even if the call is about a product we don't have, The Macomb Group can usually find a way to help. We simply do everything we can to get a customer's plant up and running in the least amount of time.

With the experience, people, and service The Macomb Group provides, there is no question as to why we have grown. Now, we must use our knowledge to train the next generation of sales people to ensure our company can continue to evolve for the customers that will need industrial PVF products in the future.

The Macomb Group (www.macombgroup.com) is proud to offer our customers quality products and top-notch service. Contact us by email at info@macombgroup.com or by phone at 888-756-4110.



Solution Spotlight

Defeat Dirty Filters Once and for All

DTE Energy is converting its water filtering system to John Deere Greentech self-cleaning filters to increase plant efficiency and reduce man-hours for maintenance.



The plant uses Detroit River water in its heat exchangers to cool the plant's equipment. Having used traditional filters, Larry Roberts, Work Management Specialist at DTE Energy was dissatisfied with the many man-hours required to keep the heat exchanger filters clean.

"We use river water for cooling our equipment and we were having problems with sediment in the water getting into the heat exchangers," Larry says. "When we have bad weather, it stirs up the river, so naturally we're going to get more sediment."

When the filters are clogged, the cooling system doesn't work properly, which drains energy. If the cooling system quits altogether, overheating could quickly become a dangerous problem requiring a plant shutdown. That's not an acceptable option for a plant that powers the city of Detroit.

A simpler, cleaner solution

The new John Deere Greentech self-cleaning filters have a finer mesh than filters DTE previously used, which makes screening more effective. Additionally, the filters use an automated backwash cycle to remove debris and prevent clogging.

DTE has already installed two filters, with two more filter installations pending. Maintenance alone is a significant cost savings that justifies the transition. The filters are expected to improve the life of the equipment they cool as well.

"We had to clean the previous filters frequently, depending on season," Larry explains. "Looking at the repair costs of the old style filters plus the hours we spent on them, we already see a significant savings. I'm hoping we don't have to touch the new filters for a year, or even a year-and-a-half."

During preliminary testing with a similar filter, the level of water particulates at the filter outlet was tested at 7 mg/L, down drastically from 124 mg/L in the water going into the filter. (See the results here (www.updatefrom.com/macomb/1302/files/DTERouge_SelfCleaningFilterSootBlowerAfterCoolers.pdf.) The Macomb Group and DTE expect the John Deere Greentech filters to provide a similar improvement for DTE. Further testing will be conducted soon.

Put us on speed dial

DTE Energy is a long-term customer of The Macomb Group because its associates aren't just distributors, they are also highly trained problem solvers.

"Chuck Raymond is number one on my speed dial," says Larry, which might be the best compliment you can give a person. "He's the kind of individual where if you've got a problem, he will be there. Having somebody like that is an asset, and it makes doing the work in the plant a lot easier."

Larry adds, “The Macomb Group is our go-to resource whenever we have a question. They’re not just dealing with whether this one filter works, they’re dealing with the plant as a whole.”

The Macomb Group (www.macombgroup.com) is proud to offer our customers quality products and total system solutions. To learn more, contact us by email at info@macombgroup.com or by phone at 888-756-4110.



Did You Know

Energy Is Money; Do You Want to Save It or Burn It?

In today's economy energy is money. You can either send your money into the atmosphere or keep it in your pocket; it's your call.

Behind the need to save energy are big-picture issues such as significant environmental concerns about air quality, the ozone layer, global climate change, and clean water. But, on a personal level, saving energy means cutting costs to increase profits.

Finding ways to save

For companies that are already operating on lean crews and limited fixed expenses, what is left to cut?

The Macomb Group is saving hundreds of thousands of dollars for companies — sometimes in a matter of months — with its green initiative, the Macomb Energy Resource Integration Team (M.E.R.I.T.) (www.macombgroup.com/green-initiative). Using energy audits, The Macomb Group and its partners analyze energy systems as a whole and determine where a company is leaking energy.

M.E.R.I.T. consultants take a “systems” approach to review your water, heating, steam, and piping designs. An energy audit can help your company reduce

- Energy consumption — Improve the efficiency of the total system.
- Maintenance costs — Ensure system components work together optimally.
- Labor and downtime — Innovative products require less frequent replacement and repair.
- Water use — Lower consumption and lower sewage costs.

This whole-system approach saves companies a lot of time and money. Simply bringing in a boiler company will often just result in a bigger boiler. Similarly, a pump salesman will try to sell you a more efficient pump. But boilers and pumps don't work in isolation; they can only deliver savings when they work efficiently with the whole system.

With a complete energy system audit, you learn about improving the efficiency of the entire system from the smallest gasket to the biggest boiler.

Small steps will get you there

“It's not about selling one piece of hardware — a pump, a boiler, a control valve — it's about using these systems together to best serve the purpose for which they were designed,” explains Mike Boyd, a principal at The Macomb Group.

Often The Macomb Group discovers that the equipment is operating far over capacity. For instance a hotel in Michigan might have a boiler equipped to handle -10-degree temperatures. But even in Michigan, the system needs to cope with that extreme temperature only two or three days a year. If the boiler operates at that capacity all year long, the amount of energy lost can amount hundreds or even thousands of dollars daily.



“That type of system is so far oversized, 98% of the time it’s operating out of its peak efficiency,” says Jeff Turner, from energy partner Systecore. “A boiler may need 100,000 BTUs of energy, but if it’s always running at 4 million BTUs, that’s 3,900,000 BTUs going up the stack, while only 100,000 is used for the system.”

An energy audit can range from an in-depth analysis to a simple walk through. The Macomb Group often takes a “wade in” versus a “dive in” approach. This way, companies start with a small project to realize immediate savings, and then move on to larger projects.

Alma College is the perfect example. (Read about it in the Success Story article in this issue of *The Macomb Pipeline*.) The college started by replacing one boiler pump and saved approximately \$2,000 per year on its gas bill. The college has since replaced a total of 45 pumps, realizing a savings of more than \$90,000 annually.

The upgrades recommended are not limited to big-ticket items. The Macomb Group can walk through and recommend small fixes such as replacing steam traps or capping off leaking valves; even these inexpensive repairs can return a significant savings. Sometimes, Mike says, The Macomb Group will recommend replacing a \$250 part, and the client can recoup the cost in the savings they see on the very next energy bill.

“The main thing is to do it now,” he says. “Why wait?”

Let us find your biggest energy leak! Contact us today to set up an energy audit. Visit our website (www.macombgroup.com) or contact the experts at The Macomb Group by email at info@macombgroup.com or by phone at 888-756-4110.



Chuck's Quick Tip

Chuck's Quick Tip: Find the Perfect Gasket for Safety's Sake

"Gaskets aren't sexy," says Dan Titus, the "Gasket Whisperer" at Flexitallic, a partner of The Macomb Group. Dan says that gaskets are often an afterthought in pipe system designs. However, selecting the right gasket for a job is critical.



"What keeps me awake at night is the thought of someone using the wrong gasket in the wrong application," says Dan. "Using the wrong gasket can result in major environmental impact or even injury or death of a worker."

Gasket Best Practice: Build the right gasket into your pipe system design from the beginning!

What is possibly the least expensive item in a plant quickly becomes the most expensive item if the wrong gasket is installed. Incorrect gasket selection and installation results in significant costs such as lost productivity, increased downtime, product loss, increased emissions, fines from monitoring agencies, risk to health of employees or nearby residents, and serious safety issues.

Things to consider are the type of flange, gasket materials, the media the gasket will come in contact with, and the pressure temperatures it will be subjected to. For example, will the chemicals the gasket comes into contact with have corrosive qualities? How much thermal cycling should be expected? These are significant factors to consider when choosing the right gasket.

The Macomb Group offers a simple way to remember all the details of gasket selection: **STAMP**.

- Size
- Temperature
- Application
- Media
- Pressure

Experts at Flexitallic offer an extensive set of gasket choices and can also custom-design gaskets to ensure the proper seal in specific environments. They offer consultations with a gasket expert to ensure proper gasket selection and installation, which saves future expense and reduces risk of system failure. Calling with information collected using the STAMP method will ensure the best results.

Visit our website (www.macombgroup.com/products) to see our products. Place your order and consider it done! Contact the experts at The Macomb Group by email at info@macombgroup.com or call Tim Chapman at 734-943-1009 or Jennifer Jessen at 734-943-1010.



About Chuck: Chuck has been a PVF industry icon for over 42 dog years. He has never been one to lie down on the job — he has done everything from fetching will call orders, to chasing down trucks to make sure his deliveries are on time. So, remember: **If you've got a problem and you're feeling stuck, don't get discouraged, you can always ask Chuck!**