



# The Macomb Pipeline

Volume 2, Issue 6

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

### Don't Put Off Critical Repairs!

Delaying a major repair can take you to the brink of disaster. Save money, headaches, and sleepless nights by getting it done now. **(Page 2)**



## Macomb News

### Introducing a One-Stop Shop for Specialty Services

The Macomb Group has moved all its specialty services divisions to the central Sterling Heights location, providing easier access to our experienced specialists and faster service for our customers.



**Plus:** Learn about how The Macomb Group's new Northeast Ohio facility will help us get you the materials you need, when you need them. **(Page 4)**

## Did You Know

### Take a Streamlined Route to Better Service

A new centralized location, a digitized filing system, and company-wide collaboration are driving growth and improved customer service at The Macomb Group's Heating Division. **(Page 8)**



## Solution Spotlight

### Are You Solving Only Half of Your Heating Problem?

Efficient boilers provide a cost-effective solution for heating needs, but updating the pumping system can multiply their effectiveness and your savings. **(Page 6)**



## Chuck's Quick Tip

### Why Steam Traps? And Which Type Do I Need?

A steam trap discharges condensate while preventing live steam from escaping. Depending on your application, your steam trap is probably one of these three basic types. **(Page 10)**



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## Success Story

### Don't Put Off Critical Repairs!

It's hard to face up to a big repair, but a temporary fix only delays the inevitable. The problem won't just go away, and when your temporary fix fails, you may be left in an even worse position.

That's the scenario decision-makers at Ferris State University faced three years ago when one of two heat exchangers serving a block of eight dorms failed. And due to financial guidelines set forth by the university, they couldn't fix the problem immediately.

The Macomb Group's West Region Sales Manager Mike Boyd, a highly experienced heating professional, describes the temporary solution: "The units each served four dorms, so when one failed, the workaround was to run a pipe between the buildings and use the remaining unit to heat them all."

This makeshift solution led to many sleepless nights for property managers. Then, The Macomb Group offered Ferris an efficient replacement: A compact EasiHeat heat exchange system from The Macomb Group's longstanding manufacturing partner Spirax Sarco.

#### Teetering on the brink

"We worked with Ferris for two years, warning them they were just teetering on the edge of disaster," Mike says. "They didn't have a backup."

The old, over-burdened system supplied hot water for every requirement, from student use and laundry to cleaning and food preparation. State plumbing code stipulates that all dwellings must have water, so a failure of the second unit would mean a potential shutdown for the college.

Fortunately, before disaster could strike, Ferris was able to include the EasiHeat solution in this year's budget. The Macomb Group worked with the local plumbing contractor to install the system during the summer vacation, switching it on just before school resumed.

The installation was far from a simple like-for-like replacement. The high-efficiency, low-maintenance Sarco system employs a special controller using software developed by Sarco to ensure temperature stability and optimum condensate drainage. Steam flow rate is modulated to exactly match system demand.

#### No more nightmares

It's a state-of-the-art, instantaneous heater that does not require a storage tank, so it can always keep up —



**A compact EasiHeat heat exchange system from The Macomb Group's partner, Spirax Sarco.**



**EasiHeat is a state-of-the-art, instantaneous heater that can keep up with demand no matter what.**

or go down — with demand. Plus, it saves energy. Without a storage tank, much of the potential heat loss is eliminated.

Although the cost-saving aspect is valuable for Ferris, the key success of this installation is the peace of mind and reassurance it delivered to the college authorities.

Since that switch-on just before Labor Day, the units have worked flawlessly, without deviation from the specifications — much to the relief of Ferris plumbing overseer Kevin Myers.

“He told me he used to have recurring nightmares that he’d get a call in the middle of the night saying that old system had failed,” Mike says. “Now he can sleep at night. They have security and peace of mind, and although that’s a difficult thing to put a precise number on, everyone knows what it’s worth.”

Don't wait for your systems to fail. The Macomb Group will help you find a fix before you're in trouble! Call us at 888-756-4110 or email us at [info@macombgroup.com](mailto:info@macombgroup.com) to learn more.



## Macomb News

### Introducing a One-Stop Shop for Specialty Services

September was a month of action for The Macomb Group!

The Akron office moved out of its 35,000-square-foot facility on Johnson Street to a newly remodeled, 85,000-square-foot location. Everyone at the branch worked hard during and after hours — including weekends!

But their hard work was worthwhile; the new facility is spacious and The Macomb Group will be able to grow into this location for years to come. The facility was once a steel fabrication facility and was set up with six cranes. It turns out to be a perfect building for pipe, valves, and fittings.



**The Macomb Group's new Hose Division space in Sterling Heights.**

This expansion is a testament to the work of Dennis Roberts and his employees, who have been with him since the Richfield Building, a 15,000-square-foot space with no cranes. With this new facility and new employees, this location will soon become one of the main hubs for the Macomb Group. Congrats to everyone at Akron and best wishes for your bright future!

Along with the move to the new location in Akron, The Macomb Group also moved the Hose Division and Heating Division from Livonia to Sterling Heights.

We moved these two divisions to optimize our offerings and house all our specialty groups under one roof. We now have our Insulation, Fire Fabrication, Hose, and Heating Divisions and the Quotation Group all in the same area, which allows us to react quickly and share information easily. It also allows us to cross-train employees, so if we are overwhelmed in one area, we can help out with people from a different division. This work style will allow us to adapt to large jobs and increased business cycles.

The moves were not small tasks, as the employees from both groups can attest. The Heating Division moved William Guenther and Kevin O'Neill to their new desks in Sterling Heights to join Ian Thomas and Alan Thomas, who were recently hired to do "Bid/Spec" work and quotations.

The Hose Division not only moved employees (Tim Chapman, Leo Smith, and Pat Knittel; Jen Jessen stayed in Livonia) from Livonia, but they also had to move all of the equipment and hose. The group had to get set up so business could run as usual starting Monday, Sept. 30. A lot of people from Sterling Heights and Livonia worked hard to meet the goal, and come Monday, the Hose Division was open for business!

Our new insulation division, R.L. Bondy, will be moving employees and equipment to the Sterling Heights office the first week of November, as well. Make sure to check out the next edition of The Macomb Pipeline for more information.

Thanks to everyone in the Hose Division and Heating Division for all your hard work, and thanks to those who helped make the transition a reality. There is still a lot of work to do in the new Hose Assembly area, but the group is happy to have a larger area — almost five times the space they had at the Livonia facility — and it will be one of the premier hose assembly areas for years to come.

Thank you all for your hard work and dedication!

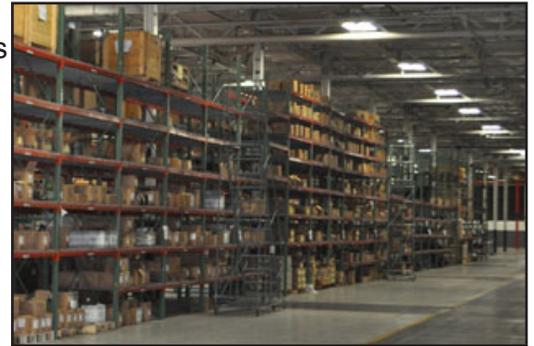
Chuck Raymond  
National Sales Manager  
The Macomb Group

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## New Northeast Ohio Facility

The Macomb Group is thrilled to introduce their new Northeast Ohio facility. With more than twice the in-stock pipe inventory of the previous facility and a vastly expanded selection of materials, the new facility will allow us to respond to both routine and last-minute orders quickly and efficiently.

“This Northeast Ohio facility will serve as a hub for our customers in the petroleum industry, who love Macomb’s commitment and core value of superior customer service,” says Dennis Roberts, General Manager, Northeast Region. “We have made a large inventory commitment to oil field products, and our knowledgeable personnel truly understand the oil and gas industry.”



**More storage space means an expanded variety of materials.**

Learn more about what our new facility means for you: Read the Special Edition! ([http://www.updatefrom.com/macomb/1309\\_special\\_edition/newsletter.asp](http://www.updatefrom.com/macomb/1309_special_edition/newsletter.asp))



## Solution Spotlight

### Are You Solving Only Half of Your Heating Problem?

Replacing an ancient cast-iron boiler with a modern, high-efficiency equivalent may offer significant standalone benefits in terms of operational and energy costs, reliability, and fast heat generation ... but it's still only half the story.

A good heating system has to be regarded holistically — all parts have to work efficiently together. At The Macomb Group, putting best-practice into action means delivering the best possible combination of components for the most outstanding result.

A perfect example has been the recent replacement of a heating system at Grand Valley State University, in what is the first phase of an ongoing program across much of the campus.

Like most universities in the United States, Grand Valley is a mix of old and new buildings. This includes a group of dormitories that are up to 30 years old and rely on ancient cast iron boilers.

It was not just that they were old, says Mike Boyd, West Region Sales Manager of The Macomb Group. The entire system was also inflexible and noisy — a big distraction for the young residents.

“It used constant-speed pumps,” he explains. “That’s one speed, all the time. Whether you’re using the whole building, just one side of the building, or even just one room, they deliver the same flow.”

#### Single-speed drawbacks

Imagine a situation in which half the building is closed, with all the valves turned off, but the system is still pumping water around at the same speed.

“You’re still using the same amount of horsepower whether it’s at full flow or half flow. It’s working harder, even though it doesn’t need to. Inside that little pump, the impeller gets shoved to one side of the casing, which causes wear on the bearings,” Mike says. “In extreme cases, it can snap off the shaft in the pump or, as the pressure rises, the closure mechanism on the weakest valve will vibrate and hum, making a lot of noise.”

Meanwhile, all the surplus energy that’s being generated is going up the vent stack.



**Three brand new Lochinvar Knight commercial boilers now keep Grand Valley University thermally efficient.**



**Variable-speed Wilo pumps drastically reduce energy consumption and automatically adjust to system demands.**

These challenges called for a two-part solution from The Macomb Group: replacing the cast iron boilers with an array of three Lochinvar Knight commercial boilers (two at 300,000 BTU and one at 400,000) and pairing them with variable-speed Wilo pumps.

The Lochinvar units offer up to 94.6% thermal efficiency, using a fully modulating burner with 5:1 turndown. The three Grand Valley boilers are essentially networked, with one central “brain” running them.

### **Automatic adjustments**

The Wilo devices use ECM motor technology to cut energy consumption by up to 80% and automatically adjust to system demands.

“We have an outside reset on the building that monitors the external temperature,” Mike says. “As it gets colder, it automatically turns the temperature of the water up.”

Another pump on the system works on differential pressure so as the valves in all the rooms on the system are opened or closed. It automatically ramps up and down based on overall demand, so the pump runs only as fast as it has to.

Mike says, “The pump is not being strained, so it’s going to last longer. And the valves don’t hum — so we don’t have any upset college students!”

But it’s not just the students who are happier. Mike estimates the school will save 50% of the energy it used to consume in this area.

“We’re playing our part in helping keep the cost of education down!” he says.

Increase the efficiency of your heating systems. Learn more by contacting The Macomb Group at [info@macombgroup.com](mailto:info@macombgroup.com) or 888-756-4110.

## Did You Know

### Take a Streamlined Route to Better Service

It's a new era of growth and customer service for The Macomb Group's Heating Division. Improved communication, processes standardization, advanced computer applications, and a proactive approach to competitive bidding are helping drive the Heating Division's success.

Heating Division leader Dan Senia, who joined the group in January, says the move to a central office location at Sterling Heights has provided a great opportunity to build on the group's already well-established performance and reputation.



He joins Heating Division veterans Kevin O'Neill and William Gunther, who have largely been responsible for getting the heating group to where it is today by developing the expertise to provide precision quotes for contractors bidding heating jobs.

Now the team is poised for further expansion.

"We've made a lot of changes to how we do business," Dan says. "Working from a single location has improved communication and cross training and generally made things run more smoothly, but the real key for me is that we've changed from reactive to proactive quoting."

In the past, the group would get a contractor request for, say, a boiler price for inclusion in a contract bid. That still happens, but now the team also actively contacts project bidders — before being asked — with more comprehensive and well-priced equipment option lists.

#### **A simplified process**

This saves time and simplifies the whole bidding process for contractors, who get one vendor instead of many, a complete picture of the pricing schedule, and potentially lower overall costs.

Also this year, brothers Ian and Alan Thomas have joined the Heating Division to help with the expanding workload. They have accelerated the bidding process by implementing a software system for recording and reviewing jobs open for bidding.

"They have had many great ideas regarding a Heating Division filing system," Dan says. "They've helped develop a filing system where we input quotes for everyone to access, with all the factory pricings, drawings, specifications, and supporting documentation."

The information is available across all of The Macomb Group's branches and can even be accessed remotely by The Macomb Group's representatives who are meeting with contractors. Dan and his team have also standardized bidding forms so customers have a familiar format and can quickly find and evaluate relevant information.

Going a step further, the Sterling Heights operation will now be assisting all Ohio and Michigan branches in their quoting as well as seeking their input on new products and services.

“It’s helping us realize the vision of turning the group into a much more collaborative organization,” Dan says, “to better serve the needs of customers.”

Do you have a question for our Heating Division? Take advantage of The Macomb Group’s ever-growing expertise! Contact us at [info@macombgroup.com](mailto:info@macombgroup.com) or 888-756-4110.



## Chuck's Quick Tip

### Chuck's Quick Tip:

## Why Steam Traps? And Which Type Do I Need?

No steam system is complete without that crucial component: the steam trap (or simply "trap"). This is the most important link in the condensate loop because it connects steam usage with condensate return.

A steam trap quite literally purges condensate as well as air and other incondensable gases out of the system, allowing steam to reach its destination in as dry a state/condition as possible to perform its task efficiently and economically.

The quantity of condensate a steam trap has to deal with may vary considerably. It may have to discharge condensate at steam temperature (i.e. as soon as it forms in the steam space), or it may be required to discharge below steam temperature, giving up some of its sensible heat in the process.

The pressures at which steam traps can operate may be anywhere from vacuum to well over a hundred bar (1450 PSI). To suit these varied conditions there are many different types, each with their own advantages and disadvantages. Experience shows that steam traps work most efficiently when their characteristics are matched to those of the application. It is imperative that the correct trap is selected to carry out a given function under given conditions. At first sight it may not seem obvious what these conditions are. They may involve variations in operating pressure, heat load, or condensate pressure. Steam traps may be subjected to temperature extremes or even water hammer. They may need to be resistant to corrosion or dirt. Whatever the conditions, correct steam trap selection is important to system efficiency.

It will become clear that one type of steam trap cannot possibly be the correct choice for all applications.

**There are three basic types of steam traps into which all variations fall; all three are classified by International Standard ISO 6704:1982.**

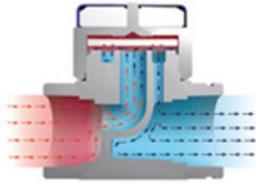
Types of steam trap:

**Thermostatic (operated by changes in fluid temperature)** — The temperature of saturated steam is determined by its pressure. In the steam space, steam gives up its enthalpy of evaporation (heat), producing condensate at steam temperature. As a result of any further heat loss, the temperature of the condensate will fall. A thermostatic trap will pass condensate when this lower temperature is sensed. As steam reaches the trap, the temperature increases and the trap closes.



**Mechanical (operated by changes in fluid density)** — This range of steam traps operates by sensing the difference in density between steam and condensate. These steam traps include 'ball float traps' and 'inverted bucket traps'. In the 'ball float trap', the ball rises in the presence of condensate, opening a valve

which passes the denser condensate. With the 'inverted bucket trap', the inverted bucket floats when steam reaches the trap and rises to shut the valve. Both are essentially 'mechanical' in their method of operation.



**Thermodynamic (operated by changes in fluid dynamics) —**

Thermodynamic steam traps rely partly on the formation of flash steam from condensate. This group includes thermodynamic, disc, impulse, and labyrinth steam traps.

Visit our website ([www.macombgroup.com/products](http://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](mailto:info@macombgroup.com) or by phone at 888-756-4110.



***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!***