



The Macomb Pipeline

Volume 3, 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.

 **ENTER TO WIN**
Macomb Group swag!



Success Story

To Russia from Toledo

Overcoming design and logistical barriers comes naturally to The Macomb Group — even when that means sourcing and shipping parts halfway around the world. For our customers, navigating complex design, customs, and tariff regulations is never a problem. (Page 2)



Macomb News

3 Ways Behind-the-Scenes Technology Makes Your PVF Projects Successful

We know you need precise service, tracking, and delivery. That's why we run our business with cutting-edge IT solutions that ensure you get the materials you need, when you need them. (Page 4)



Solution Spotlight

Need a Custom Automated Valve Assembly? "MacGyver" Is Here!

What do TV hero Angus MacGyver and Macomb's Jim Ballantyne have in common? Creative solutions and Scottish determination! Designing a custom valve automation solution to avoid a costly steel plant shutdown is a good case in point. (Page 6)



Did You Know

Protect Your Pipes the Right Way: Why One Size Doesn't Fit All

Your pipe systems are too important for cookie-cutter insulation. Learn how to protect your pipes the right way. (Page 8)



Chuck's Quick Tip

Here Are the Brackets That Will Really Help You Deal with March Madness

Does your facilities team go crazy trying to find the right shelving, storage, or wall units for equipment and tools in your work areas? Stop the madness! Use this versatile system to put the fun back in the facilities engineering. (Page 13)



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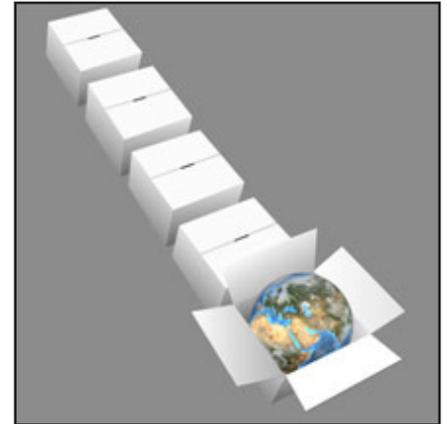


Success Story To Russia from Toledo

Negotiating multiple international boundaries, measurement scales, quality standards and tariff regulations can quickly turn what might otherwise be a straightforward job into a tangled web of challenges.

But with the experts at The Macomb Group, you still get a streamlined, expertly handled shipment, as Gale Heller, outside sales, and his team demonstrated when a valve order for a glass furnace in Russia landed on his desk.

“The project was for a Toledo company that engineers and builds glass furnaces all over the world,” Gale says. “I’ve worked with them for about 40 years. This time they needed a whole range of valves for a plant in Krasny Sulin, Russia.”



Krasny Sulin is in southern Russia, near the Ukraine border and the Sea of Azov. Normally, Gale’s team takes international orders in stride. But Russia presented several extra layers of complexity. The parts were needed in metric measurements (DIN instead of ANSI) and had to conform to Russia’s GOST quality specifications.

Gale had to source a manufacturer that could meet both the end-customers’ requirements and The Macomb Group’s demanding quality specifications — and that could deliver on time. Then, the team had to orchestrate a logistics process that was a bit more complex than usual.

Taking on the challenge

It turned out that the most suitable supplier was in Japan. That was just the start of the challenge, but The Macomb Group’s team was up to the task.

“We have quite a few knowledgeable people in our Toledo branch,” Gale says. “A lot of suppliers probably wouldn’t even have attempted that business. In fact, we were the only firm to bid for the entire contract. It is certainly a worthwhile job for us and our customer, but there was a lot of work to find the parts, price the job, and order and expedite it.”

Gale notes that time zones were one of the roadblocks that the team learned to deal with. “Expediting the thing was crazy because they’re not open when we’re open,” he says. “Here you can email back and forth in a second, but if you emailed the end customer in Russia today, you might not get an answer until tomorrow.”

Furthermore, the completed order had to travel a complex route. The valves had to be shipped from Japan to the United States, undergo customs inspection, be repacked, and then ship to Russia, with a maze of customs and tariff regulations on the way.

It wasn’t just time difference and geographical boundaries that got in the way either. Language was also a challenge, with translation required at every stage. “Every step just took more time,” says Gale.

Lessons learned — and mission accomplished

Fortunately, the project had a good lead-time, and the experts at The Macomb Group have enough experience that even when faced with significant obstacles and process changes, they know how to get things done.

So how would Gale feel if he were asked to do it all again?

“We’d do it,” he says. “It’ll be easier next time and I know the pitfalls. For example you can’t change the ‘Ship To’ address mid-stream when shipping out of Japan. Next time, I’d ship direct to the destination.”

The moral of the story is that just when you think you’ve seen it all, there’s something new to learn. But when you’re working with a company that’s ready to go the extra mile — or, in this case, kilometer — there’s nothing that can’t be accomplished!

Do you have a special order or unusual job? The Macomb Group experts work to be sure every job is the best it can be. Let us figure out how to solve your next challenge. Contact us by email at info@macomb-group.com or by phone at 888-756-4110.

Macomb News

3 Ways Behind-the-Scenes Technology Makes Your PVF Projects Successful

To many people inside and outside the PVF industry, pipe, valves, and fittings sound pretty low-tech. But you know that to keep up with business today, you need to be using advanced technology and tools that keep you a step ahead of your competition.

You need to be able to depend on a materials vendor that can keep up with your pace of business. How does The Macomb Group do that? After all, we serve customers across a wide region, from our headquarters in Sterling Heights, Mich., through Ohio, Tennessee, and even into Pennsylvania. If you need materials in any — or all — of those locations, how can you be sure we'll get it right?



The Macomb Group knows how important it is to deliver precise service, tracking, and delivery for your business. That's why we run our business with cutting-edge IT solutions that ensure you get the materials you need, when you need them. Here are three ways we use behind-the-scenes technology to accomplish this:

1. Tying it all together

The most important key to running our wholesale distribution business across a wide region is communication. Our systems are fully integrated so that all locations, and everyone who deals with your order, have the right information to do the job you expect.

All of The Macomb Group's locations utilize the same ERP software and shared data to eliminate geographic boundaries. Every user throughout all branches has the ability to manage transactions, transfer stock, and print documents from any location, to, and for any location seamlessly.

Our R.L. Bondy Insulation Division (http://www.updatefrom.com/macomb/1306/macomb_news.asp) also uses software designed specifically for the construction business to support job-costing and project-management functions. The R.L. Bondy Insulation Division works together with all the other divisions at The Macomb Group to form a comprehensive, full-solution provider.

2. Keeping it organized

Another way we are streamlining our operations is by making it easier to track and access all the critical forms and documentation related to our customers' orders. We recently deployed a comprehensive Document Management System that has allowed us to convert storage of more than 4 million pieces of paper per year to electronic documents. This means we can stop burying information in file cabinets and make it accessible and useful instead. Through the system, we can quickly pull up necessary documents to ensure orders are correct and customers have the information they need about their products.

A good example of the value of this electronic Document Management System is the role it plays in providing Mill Test Reports (MTRs). MTRs define the material's origin, tensile strength, and varying chemical composition, and they are essential documentation for many contracting jobs. If you don't have the MTR, very often you can't proceed with your job. Our document management system ensures you have the total traceability (http://updatefrom.com/macomb/1309_special_edition/article_two.asp) and materials you need, when you need them.

3. Keeping it secure

Naturally, because your business and ours both depend on our ability to serve you any time, we pay special attention to the security of all these systems.

Having a fully integrated network across all locations gives us the advantage of being able to proactively troubleshoot our IT systems. Our IT team can connect directly to any computer or device for remote control or debugging.

In addition, we house our servers in a data center that's hyper-secure: Think NORAD. Our facility has the latest high security features for physical security as well as extensive software protection, including secure backups and automatic disaster recovery/failover processes to protect all of our data and our customers' data.

Helping customers connect in the easiest ways possible

In reality, all of these systems are in place to make it easy for you to do business with us. If you want to learn more, you can start by visiting our website at www.macombgroup.com, where you can find detailed information about products, vendors, and our capabilities.

Prefer to pick up the phone? We have a complete call center so you can talk to our specialty divisions directly. Our automated call distribution system gets your call to the right department quickly, whether you need Inside Sales, Accounting, HR, IT, or any one of our specialty divisions such as Fire Protection or our Heating Division.

And if you're online, visit our Facebook page, check out our newsletters, and click around on our blog. You'll learn about what's going on now and get news about new initiatives as they develop.

For example, in 2014, we're looking forward to implementing graphical dashboards — reporting tools that will put useful information in the hands of people in our organization in the format they need. We are also in the midst of rolling out a new Transportation Management System that will provide updates and billing information earlier in the process and integrate directly with our ERP software. Having this information earlier in the process improves our ability to provide more accurate costs earlier in our billing process. And later in the year, we'll be looking at the possibility of adding eCommerce functionality to our website.

Still think PVF is low tech? Not any more! The Macomb Group invests in the tools we need to make sure you can run your business.

If you're looking for a PVF vendor with the cutting-edge technology and expertise it takes to keep up with your business, then look no further. The Macomb Group is the reliable resource you need to get jobs done on time and on budget. Contact us by email at info@macombgroup.com or by phone at 888-756-4110.

Solution Spotlight

Need a Custom Automated Valve Assembly? “MacGyver” Is Here!

For a steel plant, a shutdown can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars per day. But that was the threat engineers at a Detroit plant faced when they had to replace aging valve actuators located right in the middle of their production process.

That’s when Jim Ballantyne stepped in. He’s Macomb’s very own MacGyver — with a toolbox.

Not only does Jim share the TV hero’s Scottish heritage, but he also has a famous knack for thinking outside the box and developing creative solutions for tough challenges. The steel plant situation may not have been as dire as the nuclear meltdowns that MacGyver sometimes faced, but it was critically important to our customer.



Essential automation in inconvenient locations

Because of this customer’s unique situation, the actuators were obsolete but had to be replaced in-situ to avoid a shutdown.

Although The Macomb Group had replacements off the shelf, the plant couldn’t halt production to remove the old actuators, redesign the brackets that fixed them to the valves, and install the new actuators. Multiple critical dimensions simply couldn’t change, like the locations of the pipelines and how far the actuators stick out from the bracket.

“Jim went out with our salesman and figured out a way to mount our actuators without any other changes,” explains John Mazzie, Inside Sales Manager with The Macomb Instrument Group. “He came up with a bracket design that would adapt to their existing bracketry, allowing our actuators to work seamlessly. We replaced all 15 of the critical actuators without interrupting the plant’s production.”

And the solution works great! “They just received the first round of these a few weeks ago,” John says. “They’re working great and they bolted right up.”

Precision solution

This precision solution depended on Jim’s careful measurements, inventive design, and close communication with a local machine shop to produce the bracketry and couplings.

John, who has worked with Jim for 27 years, speaks highly of his coworker’s skillset: “He’s just one of those guys who can do anything. He’s a great mechanic and he knows valve automation inside and out. He can come up with great solutions.”

His abilities proved to be highly beneficial for this customer. “In this case, being able to take measurements out in the field was critical. It worked really well, and all the machining was done correctly too,” John says. “It’s great to see when experience, creativity, and partnering with the right folks comes together; everything fits.”

Because they go back a long way, John fondly refers to Jim as “a crazy old Scotsman” but he knows, as he has demonstrated time and time again, that, just like Angus MacGyver, Jim Ballantyne knows how to turn a critical issue into a creative solution.

Find the best, most reliable valves for your application and reduce maintenance costs and downtime. Learn more by contacting The Macomb Group at info@macombgroup.com or 888-756-4110.



Did You Know

Protect Your Pipes the Right Way: Why One Size Doesn't Fit All

The variety we see in pipe, duct, and equipment systems is incredible. From fire suppression systems in your local school to chemical and petroleum systems to systems in municipal incinerators to food service freezer systems, the applications and environments are endless. So when it's time to insulate those systems, it's critical to be sure you have the right insulation for your specific application.

That's where R.L. Bondy comes in. Whether you're insulating your system in a high-temperature or low-temperature environment, sterile, chemical, or combustible, our experts can consult with you to ensure you have just the right insulation material for your needs.

You might be asking yourself, how hard can it be? Insulation is insulation. But the array of available products can be truly daunting. Here is a sample of the kind of variety you'll find when you start looking at pipe insulation.

Elastomeric

Elastomeric insulation is a cellular material used for low-temperature systems such as chilled water and refrigeration in food processing and institutional and commercial building HVAC systems.



View Product Sheet - MTL Product Catalog

(http://www.programs.insulation.org/Scripts/4Disapi.dll/4DCGI/MTL/Results.html?Action=NIA_MTL&NIA_Activity=CategorySearch&KeywordID_W=395)

Cellular glass

Cellular glass is used primarily in heavy industrial applications in which the systems are exposed to extremely low temperatures or extreme temperature variation. It can be used in temperature ranges between -450° F and 800° F and is excellent for underground systems.



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(http://www.programs.insulation.org/Scripts/4Disapi.dll/4DCGI/MTL/Results.html?Action=NIA_MTL&NIA_Activity=CategorySearch&KeywordID_W=396)

Polyisocyanurate

The closed cell structure of polyisocyanurate (PIR) material makes it very reliable for applications such as insulating pipe, equipment, tanks, and ducts operating at temperatures below ambient such as commercial chilled water, refrigeration, and liquefied natural gas lines.



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(http://www.programs.insulation.org/Scripts/4Disapi.dll/4DCGI/MTL/Results.html?Action=NIA_MTL&NIA_Activity=CategorySearch&KeywordID_W=398)

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(http://www.programs.insulation.org/Scripts/4Disapi.dll/4DCGI/MTL/Results.html?Action=NIA_MTL&NIA_Activity=CategorySearch&KeywordID_W=400)

Fiberglass

The most common and least expensive option for piping, duct, and equipment insulation is fiberglass. Used from commercial to heavy industrial applications, this material can be installed on systems with operating temperatures from 0° F up to 750° F.



Fiberglass Board and Blanket Insulation Products



Fiberglass Pipe Insulation Product

Mineral fiber pipe

Mineral fiber insulation is primarily used in heavy industrial applications with high operating temperatures (up to 1200° F) such as power plants, refineries, and steel mills.





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(http://www.programs.insulation.org/Scripts/4Disapi.dll/4DCGI/MTL/Results.html?Action=NIA_MTL&NIA_Activity=CategorySearch&KeywordID_W=403)

Flexible aerogel insulation

Extremely efficient per inch of thickness, flexible aerogel insulation is a composite of an amorphous silica-based aerogel cast into fiber reinforcement. Key applications include original equipment manufacturer (OEM), pipeline, vessels, and equipment in commercial and industrial applications.



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(http://www.programs.insulation.org/Scripts/4Disapi.dll/4DCGI/MTL/Results.html?Action=NIA_MTL&NIA_Activity=CategorySearch&KeywordID_W=426)

Poured-in-place

Granular poured-in-place insulation for underground piping, ducts, and tanks is also available. These are granular materials generally made from engineered blends of inorganic materials or calcium carbonate and require no mixing or curing. The hydrophobic materials provide thermal insulation, corrosion protection, and load bearing properties.

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(http://www.programs.insulation.org/Scripts/4Disapi.dll/4DCGI/MTL/Results.html?Action=NIA_MTL&NIA_Activity=CategorySearch&KeywordID_W=409)

Finish it right: Weather barriers, vapor retarders, and finishes

As you can see, selecting the right insulation is a bit of a science. The right material is critical to getting the job done correctly.

R.L. Bondy experts can help with both. Once we have provided you with a recommendation for the insulation material, we can also provide the appropriate covering or finish material to protect the insulation from damage. Weather, mechanical abuse, water vapor condensation, chemical attack, and fire are all potential sources of damage.

Additionally, appearance coverings are utilized to provide the desired aesthetics, and hygienic coverings are used to provide a smooth, cleanable, surface for use in food processing, beverage, or pharmaceutical facilities.

Did insulation just get a lot more complex for you? Keep it simple. Bring your application specs to R.L. Bondy, and we'll make sure you have the materials you need, when you need them, to complete your project on time and on budget.

Don't let insulation become an afterthought. Get the insulation you need along with all your pipe system materials through your full service providers. R.L. Bondy and The Macomb Group will ensure you have all your materials through our full-service, one-stop PVF shop.

Contact The Macomb Group by email at info@macombgroup.com or by phone at 888-756-4110, and R.L. Bondy by phone at 248-547-8616.



Chuck's Quick Tip

Chuck's Quick Tip: Here Are the Brackets That Will Really Help You Deal with March Madness

Having trouble with your March Madness Brackets? Well maybe you need to look at the clamps, hangers, and brackets from B-Line.

B-Line offers an array of components that make your job easy to assemble. These tools provide a practical, cost-effective organization solution to help you reduce clutter and potential trip hazards.

Don't just take our word for it. Our customer Paul Connor at DTE Energy's River Rouge Power Plant recently sent us examples of how his Fuel Supply Group has used B-Line components to implement 5S upgrades in their facilities. Paul notes that his entire Fuel Supply Group team collaborates on solutions for their workspaces, and through their creativity, they've come up with some terrific, useful solutions.

Check out these examples:

Critical Spares "5S" Stowage System

Before



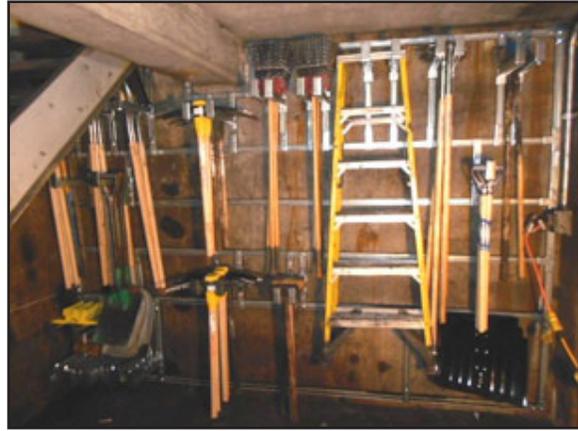
After



Before



After



B-line components can be used to fabricate any type of storage, hangar, or support framework. A little simple design work can result in solutions for hanging pipe, ladders, electrical conduit, rope, and many other items. You will be amazed at what you can build with struts, clamps, angles, dura-blok rooftop supports, and channel nuts. The configuration is limited only by your imagination!

Remember how much fun your Erector Set was when you were a kid? Get that feeling back and have a little fun with your brackets this March! Click here to download the B-line catalog (http://www.cooperindustries.com/content/public/en/b-line/resources/Library/Literature/Catalogs/Bolted_Framing.html) and start working on your brackets today!

For more information about solutions from The Macomb Group, visit our website (<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 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!***