



The Macomb Pipeline

Volume 3, Issue 5

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

Rapid Response Saves the Day in Boiler Replacement Crisis

What happens when you hit an emergency parts shortage — on a weekend? For “backflip” solutions, call on Macomb’s Weekend Warriors! **(Page 2)**



Macomb News

How Well Does Your Supplier Know Your Business — And You?

The Macomb Group’s Terry McGivern has built a career from the ground up by focusing on customers first. **(Page 4)**



Solution Spotlight

Super Coating Solves Costly Power Plant Challenge

The true value of partnership shines through when working together saves time and money for customers. When a power plant needed a powerful and reliable alternative to an expensive and recurring wear plate replacement, we found a solution that saved them thousands. **(Page 6)**



Did You Know

Using Removable Insulation Covers

Removable insulation covers can protect your valves, pumps, and more. **(Page 8)**



Chuck’s Quick Tip

Boiler Troubleshooting and Installation Checklist

Whether you’re installing new or replacement boilers and heating systems or grappling with a breakdown, Macomb experts can help. Here’s how. **(Page 9)**



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Success Story

Rapid Response Saves the Day in Boiler Replacement Crisis

Murphy's Law says that if something can go wrong it probably will. And just to be sure we get the message; it usually hits at the most inconvenient times.

We've all experienced it. Like when you do your best to plan for a home project but, once you start, you discover you need to make three more trips to the hardware store to finish!

We can handle delays for most home repairs but, for customers of The Macomb Group, the consequences of stalling a project because of missing parts are usually more severe.

Case in point: A power plant suffered a forced outage and shut down in order to replace boiler drain valves. They ordered the parts and fittings they thought they needed, but then, on a Saturday in August, discovered they needed an additional 22 fittings.



"Once they ripped the valves out, they found there was more damage in the piping than they had thought," explains Macomb West Region Sales Manager Mike Boyd. "So they had to cut back farther than they expected. They needed more fittings in addition to what they already ordered for that project. They didn't know that until they cut it out."

Time to call on the "Weekend Warriors." That's the nickname adopted by Macomb's team of 20 or so key people who stand by every weekend, around the clock, to deal with just such emergencies. They take turns in pairs, 1 month on and 11 months off, to ensure Macomb is always ready to solve crises like this.

Emergency numbers

"We take these calls and, in turn, we know who to call," says Mike. "I have a list of probably 30 different managers on call too, emergency phone numbers that you can call 24/7."

In this case, he knew Macomb didn't have the required high-chrome alloy fittings and piping in stock, but he knew where to go — Pennsylvania Machine Company. He connected with them that Saturday evening.

"They stock all the materials and raw fittings and they had a guy on stand-by," Mike continues. "He was probably having dinner with his wife when I called but he said he'd call a crew in on Sunday, pull and machine the parts and ship them out airfreight."

He was true to his word, and the parts arrived at 10:00 a.m. on Monday morning in Holland, Michigan, ready for the power plant engineers to install.

Naturally, there was an additional cost for the service; Penn Machine had to bring in a team including machinists on Sunday rates. But this wasn't just a matter of avoiding a delay, but also of ensuring safety — replacing high-spec parts that otherwise could put lives at risk.

Backflips!

"The only reason we get these calls is because customers expect us to do backflips in a crisis and that's what we did," Mike adds.

"They know there's more reason to do business with us than just the flat costs. There's added value in a service like ours and that's why Macomb is growing.

"Without that, sometimes maybe they'd consider going to somebody else they think might be able to help, but because we do what we do, we're a partner with them. And that's the key term: partner. Partners help partners. We're friends. When they're troubled, we're troubled."

Weekend Warriors know their customers. Our team members are true partners who get to know your business — and know that when you call during off hours, your job is one that REALLY counts.

When you're in a bind, The Macomb Group experts are here for you. Contact us by email at info@macombgroup.com or by phone at 888-756-4110.



Macomb News

How Well Does Your Supplier Know Your Business – And You?

Every morning, when The Macomb Group opens for business, Terry McGivern is here. He's likely come to work directly from the gym or a run, so he's already focused and ready for the day. As part of the inside sales team, Terry splits his time between contractor sales, purchasing, and supporting the instrumentation division. By wearing many hats, he ensures that customers get exactly the materials they need.

"You become a resource for people, get to know them as people, and they keep coming back," he says. "Our biggest thing is customer service. If we don't have it on the shelf, we go out of our way to find the materials — and get them when they need them."

Terry knows how to provide that level of service because he's worked at nearly every level in the company since he started in 1989. He says it's the people he enjoys the most at The Macomb Group. "The reason Macomb has grown is the people we have here. I really enjoy them. We have a close knit, great crew here."

Building a career on experience

"After high school, I went into the Army and served as a medic for two years. I remained in the National Guard as an MP after that, and started working part-time at Macomb while I went to college," he recalls. His studies in electrical engineering, along with his military experience, provided a solid foundation for working with the variety of industries that The Macomb Group serves.

He has added to that experience ever since. After starting as a driver for the warehouse, Terry became warehouse manager, and then moved to the controls division. He's worked in inside sales and contractor sales, and continuously tries to add to his knowledge. "Every day I learn something new, and I try to carry that forward to the next day. We have a lot of people with a lot of great experiences, so that body of knowledge across the company is really extensive now," he says.

"My job now is kind of a hybrid of sales and purchasing, and I still specialize in instrumentation," he says. "I feel like because of my background, I am able to provide answers for people in lots of areas."

Finding balance to be the best

It's those people that keep him engaged and learning all the time, he says. "This is a great place to work. We have a bunch of great people, and there's something new every day, simple to complex. You'll take one call on half-inch black 90, and with the next call you'll have to design a full-blown actuated valve system. [It] keeps you on your toes and thinking all day long."

He also acknowledges that staying on your toes is essential in the PVF business today. "Expectations are very high," he says. "When I first started, everybody started at 8:00 a.m., just loading trucks. Today, by 6:00 a.m. the



trucks are loaded and on the road. There's a greater sense of urgency, a lot of just-in-time delivery. We have to be prepared."

Knowing the business, Terry says, is only half of the job. The rest is knowing about the people. He says, "Customer service is what our job is about. Relationships are what give life to a business. You talk to the same people on the phone, know them for years, and they'll let you know when they're having an issue, when their kid is sick, what's happening in their lives. It's a good feeling to be able to give them service that makes their lives better."

After all this focus on customers, Terry goes home to his wife, two young daughters, three Labrador Retrievers, and two cats. "It's a three-ring circus," he says. But the circus provides balance, as does his running. He is a regular participant in local races and is currently training for a half-marathon.

"Running is my biggest pastime," he says. "When you're running, it's relaxation. You're not thinking about how far you have to go. You can just let go and Zen out."

That's important, because once the run is over, he's engaged again with his family and work. "There's something going on all the time," he says.

What do you need today? With Macomb, you know you'll get it! Contact us by email at info@macombgroup.com or by phone at 888-756-4110.

Solution Spotlight

Super Coating Solves Costly Power Plant Challenge

What's a critical element in electricity production — one you might not immediately think of?

Water. LOTS of water.

But water used in cooling towers and elsewhere in the generation process can be highly impure if it's from natural sources, causing severe abrasion that can lead to costly parts replacement.

One coal-fired power plant using huge volumes of river water faced a \$20,000 bill every two years, just to replace two wear plates on a pump line. When they looked for a more cost-effective solution, Macomb and protective coatings partner Belzona came up with a cost- and time-saving solution.

"We have a good relationship with this power plant and they call me when they have a problem; we're always looking for solutions for them," says Selena Carli, General Manager of Macomb's Carrollton Division.

That's exactly what happened when the plant asked if Macomb could supply a coating to protect and preserve the wear plates. Selena and her team were already supplying Belzona products — two-part epoxy-based composite materials, incorporating abrasive-resistant ceramic aggregates — for other applications and customers.

"Ceramic tiles or coatings will make sure a customer gets the best lifetime out of a product without having to constantly replace it, suffer downtime and frequent maintenance," Selena explains.

But this is not an off-the-shelf solution. The item to be protected has to be profiled for features like medium, temperature, and pressure, so the coating is perfectly fit for purpose.

Custom process

Belzona recommended a custom coating process that fit all requirements at the power plant.

"We actually put a ceramic S metal down, then filled it up with Belzona's 1812 ceramic carbide, and then on top another coating of the S metal. That will, over time, wear off but what is underneath it, the 1812 ceramic carbide, will not," she says.

The job cost just one-tenth of a replacement and was completed during two days of scheduled outage, though



Wear plates were damaged by severe abrasion from impure water.



A custom coating of Belzona restored the plates to ideal condition.

Selena says it could probably be done in 24 hours. It also avoids the hassle and order and delivery time for replacements.

Furthermore, re-coating could extend the life of the wear plates indefinitely. The Belzona material can be re-applied on-site and, with easy, step-by-step instructions, plant engineers will be able to do it themselves. Over time, the savings could be immense.

“We’re using coatings more and more in the power plant because everything’s abrasive. Their scrubber systems, limestone slurry pumps — all kinds of things wear out because they constantly have solids running through the lines and pumps,” Selena adds.

Problem solving like this, in close cooperation with our customers, builds confidence and trust. When Macomb gets to know a customer well enough to make truly helpful recommendations, it’s a true win-win.

Don't let downtime and repeat costs hurt your business. Contact the experts at The Macomb Group by email at info@macombgroup.com or by phone at 888-756-4110.



Did You Know Using Removable Insulation Covers

Proper insulation is extremely important to keep mechanical systems up and running. But the moment a leak or another issue occurs, insulation can make a quick-fix impossible. Luckily, there is a solution to this dilemma: removable insulation covers. With The Macomb Group's acquisition of R.L. Bondy, we can now offer our customers custom removable covers for all types of valves, equipment, pumps, and more.

Whether insulation is needed for high- or low-temperature piping systems used for commercial, institutional, or industrial applications, a solution is available. Although most projects are installed using predetermined specifications, R.L. Bondy is capable of evaluating project plans for safety, efficiency, and value, and can recommend a variety of alternative insulation materials.

The covers are designed with your system's temperature in mind. They help to maintain an ideal heat level to protect system operators from potential burns when they need to uncover the item for maintenance. They also allow easy accessibility without destroying the insulation around the system.

If a leak or emergency were to occur with your piping systems, heavy duty equipment, or ductwork, removable insulation covers could save you time, money — and a whole lot of stress.



What does acquisition mean for R.L. Bondy?

Although R.L. Bondy is now a part of The Macomb Group, it maintains complete control over both production quality and schedule to ensure efficiency and streamline even the most demanding assignment.

The Macomb Group's 325,000-square-foot Sterling Heights warehouse combined with the resources of R.L. Bondy offer ample material storage capacity. Preplanned material delivery ensures better productivity and avoids material loss and damage. These expanded resources, along with our staff of industry experts, allow us to serve our customers even better than before.

We can help make your job easier for you. Contact RL Bondy by email at rlinfo@macombgroup.com or by phone at 248-547-8616.



Chuck's Quick Tip

Boiler Troubleshooting and Installation Checklist

Customers using or installing boilers and heating systems frequently turn to Macomb experts for guidance and troubleshooting — and we're happy to help, whether you're at the design (new or replacement/retrofit), installation, or repair stage.

Today's high-efficiency boilers — 90% and above — are reliable, but they're also complex and intolerant of mistreatment! It's important to understand not just the boiler itself but how it functions in the entire heating system.

From Mike Boyd, West Region Sales Manager, here are the top things Macomb troubleshooters look for to avoid problems or pinpoint their source when they occur:

- **Right materials** — All-copper pipes and fittings are best. Mixing copper and carbon steel makes the system prone to “dissimilar metals” corrosion.
- **Correct water treatment** — Chemical treatment is especially important if you're working with dissimilar metals, as mentioned above.
- **Water filter on closed loop** — High-efficiency boilers don't tolerate rust. Particulates will clog the boiler tubes and cause hot spots.
- **Treatment and filtering of pumps** — The latest rotor devices are magnetic, so they won't tolerate rust either. Iron oxide particulates stick to the rotor and eventually stop the pump.
- **Functioning flow switches** — For best results, put the switch in the 'T' fitting before you assemble piping and make sure the paddle moves before connecting it to the system.
- **Follow instructions** — All boilers, including the high efficiency Lochinvars Macomb supplies, come with fitting instructions. Follow them carefully.
- **Vent high points** — Sometimes drawings and actual installations differ. Check for high points and ensure they're vented to avoid air traps.



Questions

Of course, every installation is different, so when it comes to breakdown or poor performance, Kevin O'Neill likes to run through a list of likely trouble spots with a series of questions.

That way he can understand the structure of the system and type of heating. For example he might start at the beginning, identifying whether the system provides heat through baseboard or in-floor. He goes on to identify symptoms — like the boiler not firing, control problems, or heating in only some areas, or whether there's an installation no-no, such as exceeding maximum permissible runs of piping in an in-floor heating system. Then

he can pinpoint the problem.

Following Mike's and Kevin's guidance and individualized approach ensures custom solutions that will get or keep your heating system on track.

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!***

