

# PIPELINE

The Official Publication of the National Association of Steel Pipe Distributors, Inc. • Spring 2003



INSIDE

Where did it go?

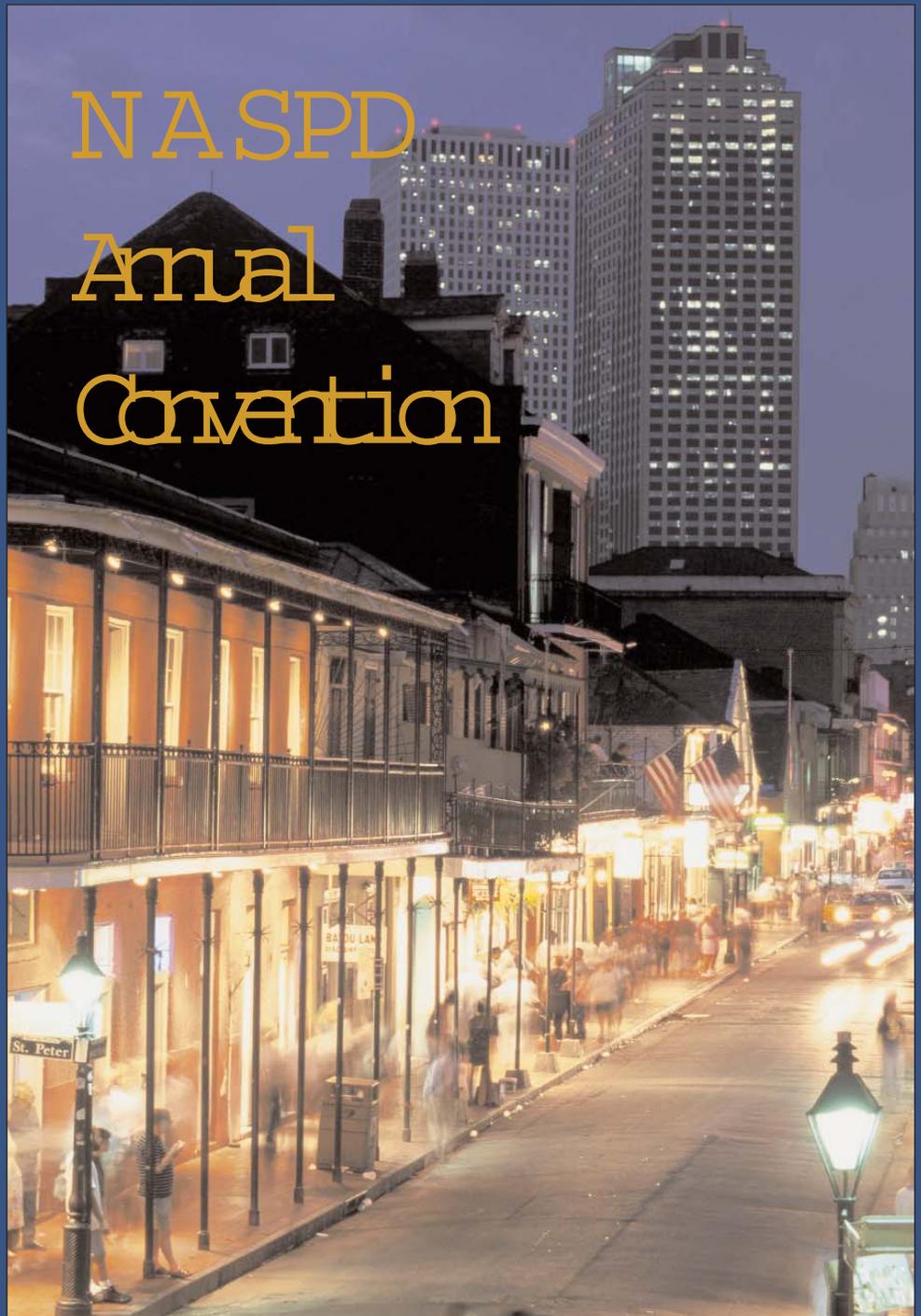
The multicultural  
workplace

Sol's Story

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# President's Message

## *Where did it go?*

**I**t seems like only yesterday that we were in Las Vegas and you elected me to be the President of the NASPD. And yet, I write this article after serving almost two years in this illustrious position. What an honor it was to be given the opportunity to lead this organization! My family has been in the steel pipe business a long time, more than 80 years, so I guess you could say that I was born to be a steel pipe distributor. And then to be asked to lead the NASPD, well, the only word is WOW!

The mettle of any president's tenure is to look back and see from where we came from compared to where we are now. During my first year as NASPD President, we defined two major projects for the organization to undertake so that the NASPD would be "the place to be" if you distribute steel pipe.

One project was the Web-based inventory-listing site for our members. This project was developed in the first year of my tenure and then deployed in the late spring of my second year. We have developed an excellent Web-based program. Now we are going through the inevitable period for any new venture of molding the product to meet everyone's needs. It seems that one of the thresholds we must overcome is the resistance to use



by Gerald Merfish  
NASPD President

the Internet to find the pipe you need to fill your customers' needs.

The second undertaking was to develop a sales training manual. This has been no easy task, as the breadth of the many kinds and types of steel pipe challenge us to write something that is valuable for all of the various types of pipe distributors. Yet, through the hard work of a handful of our members, we are on the threshold of having just such a training manual. In my opinion, the manual will speed the emergence of our new sales personnel into achieving industry proficiency and productivity. Over time, this should prove to be a great asset to our members.

In addition to these two projects, in the works are a couple of benchmarking and industry information surveys that can be tracked over long periods of time to measure the changing marketplace and evolution

of our companies. I am also proud of the internal processes that have been instituted and followed over the last two years. These processes allow a member's ideas to properly proceed through a committee structure, gathering input from our vast membership to enhance the idea and take it to fruition.

There are many people to thank for these endeavors, but at risk of leaving someone out I will not mention the Jasons, Bobs, Roberts, Davids, Jays, Andrews, Bills, Gregs, Cliffs, Dons, Mikes, Kens or many other dedicated members. To each of these people I am appreciative and indebted.

Our NASPD will be led for the next two years by the very capable Robert Griggs. John Mocker, nominating chair, has assembled a great team for Robert to work with. Robert, I wish you substantial success and remain available to assist whenever you call.

I cannot close this last article without thanking our incredible staff. Each individual is a real asset to our organization and they work so well together. So this final article ends with one of our greatest strengths—our devoted staff. To Susannah, Nancy and Sue, I can only say you all are getting better with age and experience, like fine wine. May we all go from strength to strength.

# From the Executive Director

## *NASPD moving full steam ahead*

I hope everyone had a wonderful and rejuvenating holiday season. The new year started full steam ahead at the NASPD office.

One of the first pieces of news I received after the holiday was from Dan Carito. The cancer that had so quickly changed his life and had him packing up his office with no intentions to return to work made a dramatic reversal. He is feeling great and happy to be back at work. Dan, we are all thrilled to have you back and healthy again.

Thank you all for your cooperation in proofing your NASPD Member Directory listings. We are working hard to put the Directory together and update everyone's listings. The Directory should be mailed by the end of March after the new officers are officially approved.

The Pipe Listing Website has gone through some signifi-



by Susannah Feux Porr  
NASPD Executive Director

cant changes. By the time you read this, I hope you will have noticed the improvements and started using the site as a marketing tool for your business and/or a resource for purchasing. I believe this Website will be an invaluable tool for our members. Its ultimate success will require you to change your behavior. Instead of searching through endless faxes to find the products you need, you can go to the NASPD Pipe Listing Website and see the inventories of all of our subscribers. As a marketing tool, this is a great way to have an up-to-the-minute listing of your inventory in front of all the NASPD Regular Members. We will continue to make

improvements to the Website as we receive your feedback. Be sure to get online and familiarize yourself with the Website. There will be a brief overview of the Website and a demonstration/training session at the NASPD Annual



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280'	98"	.750	Used Tank Shells	40'
70'	60"	2.000 - 2.500	Used	SRL
64.8	54"	.375	Used Spiral Weld	27' - 39'8"
50'	48"	1.750	Used	SRL
60'	48"	1.250	Used, Bare	SRL & DRL
93'	36"	1.500	Used	DRL
1,440'	36"	.935	Surplus, Fusion Bond	DRL
240'	30"	1.250	Surplus & Used	DRL
138'	30"	1.000	Surplus, Used, Bare	SRL
145'	24"	.750	Surplus, Fusion Bond	SRL & DRL
1,800'	18 5/8"	.435	Used, Bare Casing	DRL
1,000'	18"	.406	Surplus Coated	SRL & DRL
275'	22"	.500	Surplus FB, Bare	DRL
1,500'	20"	.625	#1 Used, Bare	DRL
1,400'	20"	.500	Surplus FB, Used	DRL
4,000'	13 3/8"	.430	Used, Bare Casing	DRL
5,000	12"	.250	Used, Bare, Coated	DRL
1,278'	10"	.625	Used, Bare	DRL
1,500'	10"	.365	Used, C&W	SRL & DRL
1,600'	8"	.406	Surplus, Fusion Bond	DRL
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## Letter

*Joseph Zeig, recipient of the 2002 NASPD Scholarship for Industrial Distribution, sent the following letter.*

The semester is over, the finals are taken, and now I'm waiting on grades. I hope to have a 3.3 or 3.5 for the semester. I have enrolled in 15 hours for the Spring semester and am on track for a May 2004 graduation date. Once again, thank you for the scholarship. It allows me to focus on my studies.

— Joseph Zeig, Class of 2004

Convention in New Orleans.

The Education Committee (namely Bill Buckland) has been working nonstop on our new training manual. A rough draft will be available for review in New Orleans. This too will be of great value to our members and their employees. Please contact me if you would like to participate in the last stages of this process. Otherwise, look for an opportunity to purchase the training manual in the next few months. No business in the pipe industry should go without this resource!

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS

**2003  
Summer Conference**  
June 19 - 21  
Fairmont Hotel  
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**2003 Fall Conference**  
Sept. 18 - 20  
Monarch Hotel  
Washington, DC

**2004 Convention**  
Feb. 25 - 27  
Westin Riverwalk  
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*NASPD to meet in San Francisco*

**T**he NASPD has a reputation for holding its meetings in some of the most beautiful and exciting cities in North America. This year's Summer Conference is no exception

as the NASPD will meet in San Francisco, CA on June 19 - 21 at the historic Fairmont Hotel.

World-renowned, The Fairmont Hotel presents an awe-inspiring picture of historic San Francisco. The grandeur of the fully-restored hotel, coupled with its reputation for impeccable service, promises a truly memorable experience. The recently completed \$85 million restoration project is highlighted by the re-emergence of the Main Lobby as a grand public space. Each of the hotel's spacious guestrooms and suites were also redecorated in elegant style.

Central to the Financial District, Union Square and Fisherman's Wharf, the Fairmont Hotel is located at the only spot in San Francisco where each of the City's cable car lines meet. In addition to its 591 guestrooms and suites, the Fairmont also offers two fabulous restaurants and lounges, as well as 55,000 square feet of spectacular function space. With a panoramic view of the City and the Bay from high atop Nob Hill, The Fairmont San Francisco holds an unmatched blend of elegance and superb service for an unforgettable stay.

Surrounded by the tranquil waters of the Bay, San Francisco sits amid the peaks and valleys of dozens of picturesque hills. With an endless number of landmarks punctuating the horizon, including Alcatraz, Coit Tower and the Golden Gate Bridge, it's easy to navigate the city's many interesting neighborhoods. San Francisco's vibrant cultural heritage, combined with its incredible architecture and stunning views, make it one of the most popular cities to visit in the World.

Go to [www.naspd.com](http://www.naspd.com) or call 281-531-7574 for more information about NASPD's Summer Conference and other events.



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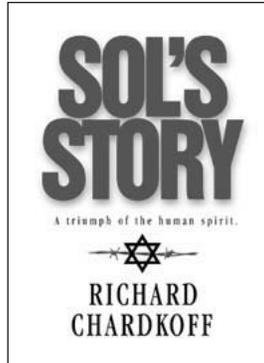
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# "Sol's Story" an amazing account of survival

**S**ol Rosenberg, President of Sol's Pipe, tells the dramatic story of his time in Nazi prison camps in a new book, "Sol's Story: A Triumph of the Human Spirit," written by Richard Chardkoff.

Rosenberg was born in 1926 in Poland. In 1939, Sol's life was shattered by the German invasion of Poland. Confined to the Warsaw Ghetto, Sol resorted to smuggling to keep the family alive. When he was 16, Sol's life was changed forever when his parents and sisters were gassed in the Treblinka extermination camp.

Eventually, Sol, too, was captured and transported to Treblinka. However, he managed to escape and return to the Warsaw Ghetto where he joined the resistance. When the Ger-



mans attacked the Ghetto, Sol participated in the uprising. One of the few survivors, Sol was again taken prisoner.

During the course of his two and one-half year imprisonment, Sol was shifted to three extermination camps

and two slave labor camps. In the final days of the war, he survived the Dachau Death March.

Upon liberation, Sol was more dead than alive, but he gradually regained his strength. On one occasion, Sol accompanied a friend who was visiting his fiancée in a Displaced Persons' Camp. There he met his future wife, Tola, another survivor. After marriage, the Rosenbergs moved to the United States. They settled in Monroe, LA where Sol built a successful pipe and steel business.

Sol Rosenberg will tell his story at the NASPD Annual Convention luncheon on Friday, March 7 at 11:45 a.m. "Sol's Story: A Triumph of the Human Spirit" is published by Cold Tree Press, [www.coldtreepress.com](http://www.coldtreepress.com).



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# *Improving quality and productivity in the* Multicultural Workplace

by Carlos Conejo

I enjoy working with multicultural work forces. I am fully bilingual and bicultural, a skill that comes in handy in relating to today's heavily Hispanic workforce in the manufacturing environment. What I often find is that these compadres have so much to offer, but their intellectual capital is rarely fully utilized by management. Many times management thinks that, because some Hispanic employees may have very little formal education or even be functionally illiterate (cannot read nor write in the mother language), they cannot get more involved in the organization to view themselves, and participate, as stakeholders.

There is a lot of untapped leadership out on the shop floor. Remember, outside of work many employees are church leaders, Scout leaders, PTA leaders, community leaders and so on.

One way companies can help overcome the challenges associated with a multicultural workforce is by emphasizing efficient plant layout and design. In some ways the US is still behind other countries—especially for skill intensive and labor-intensive jobs. Most US factories are set up in a traditional layout. That is to say, machinery is placed where it fits rather than where it is needed to maintain a smooth production flow.

Plant layout affects productivity—but that is only part of the picture.

Latinos are “hard workers,” but many lack the process knowledge needed for increased productivity. In general, good machine layout design prevents fatigue and increases the accuracy of the work, as well as assisting workers in understanding and assimilating the concepts behind the process. Japan has put a great deal of effort

into “poke yoke,” or mistake avoidance, by designing machines for quality production.

As plants get more crowded and need more equipment to keep competitive, small-footprint machines become a logical choice because they save space. In fact, they can also help eliminate waste. At one aerospace contractor, employees in the elastomer department figured out that they could be more productive by mixing smaller batches of rubber cushions in dedicated smaller kettles. This eliminated the need for a three-hour cleanup and reduced setup time significantly. By eliminating the waste, they reduced the production time from 162 days to 37 days.

The move to smaller equipment has been driven by the higher cost of facilities. In addition, shorter runs are becoming more common. The smaller machines offer convenience in such cases because they can be put on rollers and moved around where needed. Furthermore, they can be just as effective as larger machines for certain operations.

It is important to note that using smaller machines and shorter production runs can only be profitable if they fit your overall manufacturing strategy. Just buying a small machine because you don't have room won't help you if you need the capacity or capabilities that can only come with a large machine.

## *Key Performance Indicators*

It is interesting to note the five Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that Toyota (the leader in Lean Manufacturing) stresses.

1. Safety
2. Quality:
  - a.) Conformance to specifications
  - b.) Downstream “internal customer” satisfaction
3. Reducing Cycle Time
4. Workability:
  - a) Does it make sense for the employee?
  - b) Is it ergonomically engineered?
5. Reducing Costs: The philosophy is that, if the first four criteria are satisfied, then costs *will be* reduced.

Rather, customer demand should determine the manufacturing strategy, which in turn will determine the type and size of machine you use. Under certain circumstances in converting operations, even cellular manufacturing has its place. This is where one person handles multiple operations on several machines. By doing all the steps, boredom is decreased, and doing all the steps increases quality. By the way, Japanese workers operate an average of seven machines per worker, while a US worker operates an average of three machines.

Some industrial engineers have talked about the concept of the "productive atmosphere" in designing plants and even offices (The Lean Enterprise). Manufacturing is getting back to looking at how people do their jobs. Much of a Hispanic worker's job involves communication with management, fellow workers and even customers. Communication between production departments is critical, and workers need to understand that everyone's job is interdependent. That is to say, that what one does affects other areas. No one can work in isolation. Studies have shown that just linking departments together so they understand what the other department actually does increases production as much as 15-30 percent. In other words, there is a lot of money to be saved by just



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## *the Multicultural Workplace, continued*

improving communication. Because of sub-segmentation within the Latino community, this becomes a challenge for Latinos, so management's role is to create a work "familia" to leverage this strong value.

Facilitating production-related communication requires cross-functional teams. And for best results, teams should not only be cross functional but also have a variety of experience levels to aid in overcoming many of the communication and educational barriers. A well-balanced team also eases troubleshooting when production problems arise.

Communication is also hampered in environments where large or noisy machinery isolates workers. In such instances, the use of headset radios can free workers to do their jobs yet remain in close touch with all other parts of the process. The use of large status boards or digital message displays around the plant can also help keep the various parts of the process aware of what is going on.

It can all be summarized this way: If you want to change the way your plant operates, you need to change people *and* processes.

For people, you need to ask the questions:

- ☒ Who are they?
- ☒ What do they do?
- ☒ How do they know what to do?

For processes, you need to ask:

- ☒ Why is it done?
- ☒ What happens when it is done?
- ☒ Where are the bottlenecks?

Much of the manufacturing in small to medium-sized operations is now done in a bilingual and even trilingual setting. Machine and plant layout can overcome some of the inherent difficulties in a multilingual production setting, especially with issues such as safety and health.

Routine production jobs can be made less stressful with favorable plant and equipment layout. Worker stress is a major cause of poor quality, absenteeism and job turnover. In fact, we could learn from our own manufacturing history about how to do a better job in this area.

Many Latinos come from countries where there is a very definite "jefe-peon" mentality, or Theory "X" man-

agement. In other words, employees are micro-managed rather than empowered.

If you design the process so the workers' mental processes are not wasted on routine tasks that could be handled by a machine, you will reduce worker stress dramatically. Making a worker do the job of a safety switch is sure to cause both stress and eventual failure due to boredom. Also, engage the workers in job redesign by having them work with the plant management, engineers, the front office, sales and marketing, and so on. Get the engineers and customer service reps out on the shop floor. Get the shop floor or office employees out on sales calls. This way, everyone can appreciate the others' job responsibilities and contributions.

Many ideas and trends have "popped up" over the past few decades. While there is nothing wrong with the concept of teams or worker involvement, problems do arise when people attempt to increase performance without making fundamental changes in the process or people issues. Such changes must be made to make a system work, and it must have full support—from the bottom up. Notice I did not say "from the top down." Fully integrated, outrageously successful organizations are driven by decisions coming from those closest to the customer. It is then management's job to facilitate the tools, resources and strategies to make those ideas come to fruition. This is called "inverted pyramid management."

What do I think is the most important concept for a plant manager to know during the next five years?

### *Recommended*

The best ways I have found to facilitate understanding and communication in all my work with Hispanic employees are these:

- ☒ Use universal visual controls.
- ☒ Graphics and color pictures (laminated), not words on machines.
- ☒ Universal safety indicators
- ☒ Bilingual glossary of terms at every machine, with pictures.
- ☒ Either have managers learn key parts of the workers' language, or make sure you have multilingual supervisors.
- ☒ Offer Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) through a local school. Many times, instructors will come out to your plant.

Managers must always be thinking about how his/her process strategy (including all capital equipment purchases and worker training) supports the overall business strategy. The business strategy supports the customer, so the process strategy is equally critical to, but one step removed from, direct customer support.

Both the business strategy and the processes must be developed to meet the needs of the stakeholders in the company. (By "stakeholders," I mean customers, managers, workers, vendors and competitors all being a part of the company strategy. Yes, even competitors can be important. In the early '90s, Peter Senge coined the phrase "coopetition," meaning that competitors may become your partners if you work together to go after a very large job. Conversely, if a competitor goes away or gets stronger, it can seriously disrupt your workflow.) Managers who learn to look at all their company assets, people, processes and equipment in the larger context of their stakeholder strategy will be much more successful.

*Carlos Conejo, president of Multicultural Associates, is a management consultant and expert on the rapidly growing multicultural marketplace. He conducts work internationally in the areas of Lean Manufacturing, Workforce Development, and Economic Development, in either English or Spanish. His book, "Motivating Hispanic Employees: A Practical Guide to Understanding and Managing Latino Employees," has just been released. Readers may contact Conejo by phone at (805) 494-0378, fax at (805) 494-8829 or e-mail at [carlos@mculture.net](mailto:carlos@mculture.net), [www.mculture.net](http://www.mculture.net).*



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Tentative Program

# NASPD Annual Convention

New Orleans, LA, March 6 - 8

## Thursday, March 6

1:00 - 2:30 p.m.  
Membership Committee Meeting  
1:00 - 2:00 p.m.  
E-Communications Committee Meeting  
2:30 - 3:30 p.m.  
Education Committee Meeting  
2:30 - 3:30 p.m.  
Program Committee Meeting  
3:30 - 4:15 p.m.  
Executive Committee Meeting  
4:15 - 5:00 p.m.  
1st Board of Directors Meeting  
7:00 - 10:00 p.m.  
Welcoming Reception  
graciously hosted by Edgen Corp./  
Thomas Pipe, Inc.

## Friday, March 7

8:30 - 9:30 a.m.  
Roundtable Discussions -  
Prime/OCTG & Used/Structural  
9:30 - 9:45 a.m.  
Vallourec & Mannesmann Tubes  
Corp. Spotlight  
9:45 - 10:30 a.m.  
Annual Meeting of the Membership  
10:30 - 10:45 a.m.  
Break  
10:45 - 11:45 a.m.  
Mike Evans, Maurice Pincoffs Co.  
"Trade Agreements and Their  
Impact on Pipe Distributors"  
11:45 a.m. - 1:45 p.m.  
Luncheon with Sol Rosenberg

Topic: His Personal Story of the  
Holocaust as Published in the Book,  
"Sol's Story," written by Richard  
Chardkoff

6:00 - 8:00 p.m.  
Hospitality Suite - Card & Games  
Competition  
8:00 p.m. - ? Dinner on your own

## Saturday, March 8

8:00 - 8:30 a.m.  
Computer Demo hosted by  
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- Find out where to get that item of pipe you don't have in stock!

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6 months	\$90
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download a registration form at [www.naspd.com](http://www.naspd.com)

8:45 - 9:30 a.m.

Ed Rigsbee, Business Strategist  
"Partnership - How to Double  
your Strength Overnight"

9:30 - 9:45 a.m.

Janel Apps Ramsey, Kahn Steel  
"How the NASPD Pipe Listing  
Website Can Bring Value to  
your Business"

9:45 - 10:00 a.m.

Break - Computer Demo hosted  
by Janel Apps Ramsey

10:00 - 10:45 a.m.

Ed Rigsbee, Business Strategist  
"Exploring the Hard Value that  
the NASPD Provides"

10:30 a.m. - Noon

Spouse Optional:  
Cooking Class & Tasting at  
Gumbo's Cooking School

10:45 - 11:30 a.m.

Robert Aguilar,  
Steel Pipe & Tube Consultants  
"Onshore and Offshore  
Inspection of Line Pipe  
for Deepwater Installations"

11:30 a.m. - Noon

Computer Demo hosted by  
Janel Apps Ramsey

11:30 a.m. - Noon

2nd Board of Directors Meeting  
(2003 Board Members)

1:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Optional: New Orleans  
Haunted History Tour

Noon - 6:00 p.m.

NASPD Annual Golf Tournament  
at Eastover Golf Club

7:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Cocktail Reception and NASPD  
Annual Awards Dinner

10:00 p.m. - Midnight

Hospitality Suite



**Pipe Management Software**  
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# DISPATCHES



Dan O'Leary, Edgen Corporation

## *Edgen Corporation appoints President/COO*

Edgen Corporation (Regular Member) of Baton Rouge, LA, announced an organizational restructuring that includes the appointment of Dan O'Leary as President and COO. In the newly created position, O'Leary will be responsible for oversight of day-to-day operations of Edgen and its seven subsidiaries. Edgen CEO Jay Roccaforte, who has been serving as the company's president, will continue to serve as CEO, focusing primarily on strategic growth. O'Leary has nearly 25 years' of experience in energy products and services. He was most recently President and COO of Stupp Corporation.

## *Energy Tubular Group consolidation*

The Braly family of tubular related companies announced a consolidation under the name Energy Tubular Group. Energy Tubular Group includes Energy Tubulars Inc. (formerly NASPD Regular Member Pipe Sales Company), B&B Pipe & Tool Company, Petros Energy Products and Bethlehem Pipe Sales.

Energy Tubulars Inc, headquartered in Long Beach, CA will maintain all of Pipe Sales Company's end user business and mill affiliations. B&B Pipe and Tool Co., operating in Long Beach and Bakersfield, is API licensed and has a threading capability of 2-3/8" - 13-3/8". B&B also fabricates perforated liners for the Oil and Gas, Geothermal and Water Well drilling sectors.

Petros Energy Products serves as a marketing arm both in and outside of the Oil and Gas industry. Bethlehem Pipe Sales, acquired by Energy Tubular Group and hubbed in Tulsa, OK, will focus on Premium Tubing, Casing and Chrome products.

## *Stupp steps up*

John P. Stupp Jr., Executive Vice President & COO of Stupp Bros., Inc. will assume the additional duty of President of Stupp Corporation (Associate Member), a position he previously held from 1990 to 1995. Stupp Corporation, of Baton Rouge, LA, manufactures ERW pipe for both onshore and offshore transmission pipeline projects.



Caryn Ezra, Tubular Steel, Inc.

## *Ezra named VP of Tubular Steel, Inc.*

Caryn Ezra was named Vice President of Product Management at Tubular Steel, Inc. (Regular Member). Ezra will be responsible for supplier relationships and product development, as well as inventory and margin management. Tubular Steel, with sales offices and service centers in St. Louis and several other locations, is a national distributor of steel products.

## *Bayou Companies announces promotions*

Mike Kress was recently promoted to Vice President of Business Development and Marketing for all of Bayou Companies (Associate Member), which includes Bayou Coating LLC, Bayou Flow Technology, Commercial

Coating Services International and C&L Pipeline Equipment.

Danny Hebert was promoted to Vice President International, Richard Clement was promoted to Director of Sales for The Bayou Companies and Bayou LLC, and Bobby Donaldson was named Operations Director, International for Commercial Coating Services International. The Bayou Companies, headquartered in New Iberia, LA, provides coating and related services.

*Price to serve on Transportation Board*

George N. Price, General Manager of Transportation for Berg Steel Pipe Company (Associate Member), of

Panama City, FL, was appointed as council member for the Surface Transportation Board in Washington, DC. Price will serve on the Railroad-Shipper Transportation Advisory Council.

The Council consists of senior officials representing railroads, shippers, the general public, and the Secretary of Transportation. The Council will provide advice on regulatory, policy and legislative matters, as appropriate, to the Board Chairman, the Secretary of Transportation, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, and the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

## Announcements



*Thea Jessica Porr is welcomed by sister Ella and brother Liam*

Susannah and Don Porr are the proud parents of a baby girl, Thea Jessica Porr, born November 12.



*Sarah Evelyn Irwin*

Scott and Marilyn Irwin are proud to announce the arrival of their new baby girl Sarah Evelyn Irwin, born October 25.

### PIPELINE STAFF & NASPD CONTACT INFORMATION

*Executive Director/Publisher*  
Susannah Feux Porr

*Editor/Publishing Services*  
Robin Perry

*Advertising Sales*  
Chari Archer

*Administrative Manager*  
Nancy Strickland

#### NASPD MEMBERSHIP AND SERVICES:

Contact NASPD headquarters: 14760 Memorial Drive, Suite 302, Houston, TX 77079; phone: 281-531-PIPE (7473); fax: 281-531-7475. E-mail: [naspd@aol.com](mailto:naspd@aol.com); Web site: <http://www.naspd.com>. Office hours: 8:30 am - 5:00 pm CST.

**ADVERTISING IN PIPELINE:** Contact Chari Archer: phone: 512-219-6384; e-mail: [chari@tkp.com](mailto:chari@tkp.com); delivery address for advertising materials: 8211 Wexford Dr., Austin, TX 78759.

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