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the Edge

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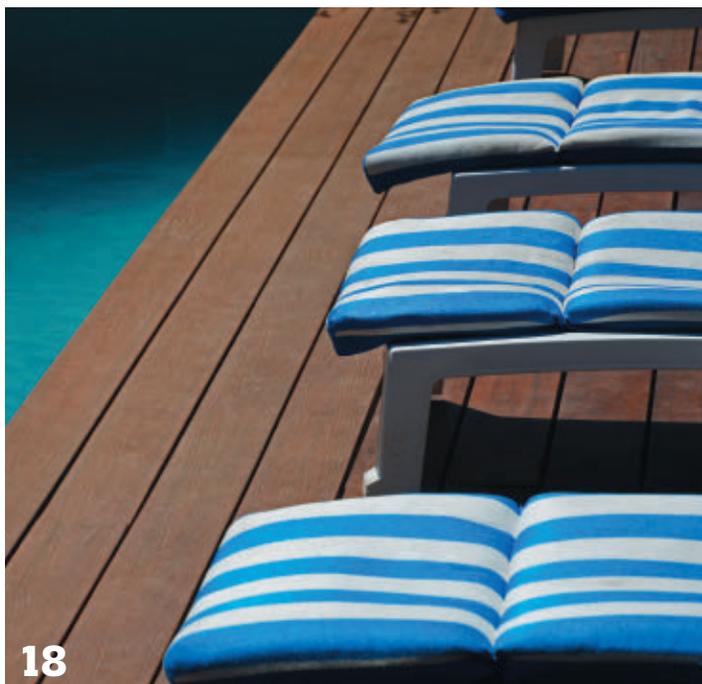
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Volume 14, Number 3

The Edge is published for the
Northeast Spa & Pool Association
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PUBLISHED AUGUST 2020/NSP-Q0320/8753



Challenging Times for Country & Industry

Mitch Katz CBP, CSP, CPO

AS I CLOSE out my term of office as president of NESPA, I want to thank my board of directors, my Executive Committee and the NESPA staff for helping the industry steer through these most trying times.

I am proud of the way the association and its members have stepped up to share their time, talent and information. We at NESPA share a special bond and it is once again apparent to me during this crisis.

I am also pleased at the way our members have focused on keeping employees and customers safe. My sense is that employees really do feel that we “have their backs” and that we did a solid job in meeting their basic needs of safety, stability and security during the first phase of the coronavirus crisis. That protectiveness has continued as the industry has opened up and has extended to customers through our social distancing, wearing masks, hand sanitizing and other smart practices.

A key area where we are helping during this pandemic is making people's outdoor living space a safe harbor, a backyard oasis where they can feel safe and that their families are secure. It is a place to play, to exercise, to have a home-office-in-a-beach-chair or to simply relax without threat of infection.

This pandemic is not yet beaten and probably will not be until we have an effective vaccine. During this time, we must keep our families, employees and customers safe. NESPA has done an outstanding job in providing the latest pandemic information in webinars and on its website. One key document, reproduced here, offers ways to keep safe. Please continue to follow this advice and have a safe season:

1. Draft and distribute the COVID-19 safe worksite practice policies found at www.nespapool.org, which are based on CDC guidelines.
2. Educate employees on COVID-19 safe worksite practices and document attendance at these education meetings.
3. Have employees sign the policies and maintain a copy in their employee file.
4. Practice worksite “safe-distancing” by breaking larger meetings into smaller groups and using remote options when possible.
5. Require crews to wear PPE, such as masks and gloves and other items recommended based on CDC and OSHA guidance.
6. Limit employees on worksites to those allowed under local Executive Orders. The only employees on site should be those necessary.
7. Spot check and document crews to ensure compliance with “safe-distancing” practices.
8. Prohibit non-essential visitors from entering the worksite, including the homeowner.
9. One person – one tool: Reduce/prevent tool sharing.
10. Stagger work start/stop times, lunch breaks and port-a-john use.
11. Practice healthy behavior: insist on proper handwashing, coughing/sneezing etiquette. Provide hand sanitizer.
12. Keep all COVID-19 documents to demonstrate compliance to authorities.

Mitch Katz is the 2019-2020 president of Northeast Spa & Pool Association. |

EXTEN

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ENDING

the Season

by Ron Derven

A FUNNY THING happened on the way to reopening businesses this spring: pool and spa and backyard accessory sales began to sizzle thanks to urban dwellers going on a house-buying spree in the country; and longtime suburban households, self-isolating with their families, took new interest in their backyards.

Business and marketing consultants, who frequently speak at The Pool & Spa Show in Atlantic City [January 26-28, 2021 at the Atlantic City Convention Center], offered ideas to help pool professionals satisfy this new demand and support customers through this stressful time. They include:

- Suggest to customers that the pool season be extended well past Labor Day – until cooler weather prevails in order to maintain family-centered outdoor activities, lower stress levels and good health.
- Promote outdoor enclosures as a way to extend the pool season, perhaps year-around.
- Take the pool season inside the house with a year-around hot tub, spa or swim spa.
- Reconnect with former customers who might never have purchased a heater, variable-speed pump or home automation system when you built the pool and suggest an upgrade now.

“COVID-19 is bad; it’s horrible,” said Mario Rossetti of Rossetti Enterprises, Scottsdale, Arizona. “However, we as an industry are problem-solvers for our customers. Right now, we are making a bad situation better; we are helping families with children make the most of their time together at home.”

For people self-isolating at home who are able to cover their base financial needs, it is not about saving money right now, it is about spending money to make their lives better, according to Guy Gruenberg of Grow Consulting, Alsip, Illinois. He said people want to stay away from airplanes and hotel rooms to reduce the threat of getting sick. They want to enjoy their families and their time together.

Dennis Gray, president of Backyard Brands, Inc., Markham, Canada suggested that the mindset of homeowners, who have been self-isolating with family these past months, has definitely changed. They see the backyard in a different light and appreciate it far more than in the past. It is now the ‘Outdoor Family Room.’ “We encouraged our dealers early on to promote the valuable role a pool or spa could play in helping the family through the pandemic. Stats for the U.S. aren’t available yet, but in Canada, there is a 16- to 20-week wait for a new hot tub. That has never happened before in the industry,” he said.

BOOST YOUR SALES THIS FALL AND BEYOND

Here are other ideas from the marketing pros:

- **Make the most of this season and future seasons by boosting your online business.** Many pool and spa professionals have long resisted online selling, but in this time of pandemic and whatever comes next, a strong online presence can only benefit your customers and your store. They can order chlorine online and pick it up in the parking lot. Consumers will use drive-by shopping for convenience and safety.
- **Push backyard accessories along with your pools and spas.** Customers who have a new focus on the backyard can be roughly broken out into two categories: those who accessorize the backyard first, then buy a pool; and those who buy the pool and then accessorize. Win both groups by furnishing them with a plan that starts with a pool or one that starts with an outdoor kitchen and landscaping and is completed with the pool.
- **Turn your parking lot into a showroom.** Many pool professionals have been using the front of their stores and businesses as a showroom for years. If you don't do that, start now. People are hesitant to come into stores to browse, but if you inspire them with an eye-catching display, it can mean new business.
- **Partner with your suppliers to build a product buffer for the 2021 season.** If you and your suppliers ran out of product you needed, make sure that does not happen in 2021 by ordering more to have on hand.
- **Can't see customer face-to-face right now? Meet them on YouTube!** Commit to making 2-minute to 4-minute videos with a message for your consumers and prospects. Need ideas? Do a YouTube on pool inspections. When is the last time the electric at their pool was checked? Create a video on your safety policies when visiting a customer's pool. Do a YouTube on things a service tech does at the pool that customers never see.

EXTENDING THE POOL SEASON

There is big concern about when children will be able to return to school safely and parents to work. So rather than simply follow old habits of years past and close the pool after Labor Day Weekend or by the end of September, pool service people should encourage customers to keep them open – at least until the leaves begin to fly.

Extending the pool season can work well even in cold climates, according to Rossetti. “Help your customers visualize a vacation all year around. For existing customers, suggest packages that include variable-speed pumps, heat pumps and solar blankets to keep the pool warm – particularly at night – even as the temperatures drop.”

“In terms of extending the season,” suggested Gray, “start communicating right now with your customers to keep the pool and spa open. Customers may need a gentle nudge to do this.”

SELL ENCLOSURES TO FURTHER EXTEND SEASON

Another way to extend the pool season – perhaps right through the winter and into spring – is with the addition of a pool enclosure. You can satisfy your customers' need for a pool enclosure three ways that could fit many people's budget. An inflatable bubble or dome is the least expensive way to go. A better enclosure is a tubular frame structure with fabrics stretched tightly over the roof and walls. These beauties can typically withstand snow and wind. Finally, there is the custom enclosure with a permanent roof structure and walls and perhaps windows open to the outside to let in the light.

TAKE THE POOL SEASON INDOORS WITH A SWIM SPA

Your customers are enjoying their pools over the summer and the fall in the backyard. Now help them keep their spirits up by bringing a pool into the house this winter. “Sell your customer a portable spa for inside the home or on the deck,” said Rossetti. “A portable spa on a deck does not have to be enclosed and your customer can

enjoy it in the middle of winter in the middle of a snowstorm if they wish. Don't sell spas by talking about horsepower. Help customers visualize how they can de-stress with it. Highlight relaxation. Talk family togetherness. Talk low maintenance. Show pictures of spas out on the deck in snow. How cool is it to slip out through the snow and jump into a spa?”

Promote swim spas, asserted Gray. Understand that there has been a sea-change in consumer awareness and desire for the swim spa, which is unfolding quickly. “Many dealers have been slow to recognize that this trend is ‘the newest type of swimming pool.’ The swim spa is four-seasons and rather than exercise, most people seem to use them as a plunge pool for relaxation,” he said.

RECONNECT WITH OLD CUSTOMERS

All the consultants suggested reconnecting with old or dormant clients that the pool professional has not been in touch with for a while. Connect with the customers who did not buy a heater when the pool was built, or with those who still have single-speed pumps running up their electric bills.

BUILD A BACKLOG FOR NEXT SEASON

It's time right now to build a backlog for next season. “The pool builders I work with are swamped right now, but at times like these a market can change from hot to warm quickly,” said Rossetti. He cautioned that this is no time to back off on new orders because you are busy; it is time to build a backlog.

“I see a lot of service companies and builders backing off [of pursuing new sales] because they are busy and cannot even make appointments until late summer. But this is the time to build business for next year. If you couldn't do the pool for this season, get them on the schedule for next season. You don't have to stress out their budget. If you normally get paid 1/3, 1/3 and 1/3, don't do that now. If your customer has to wait until next year to get the pool, take only a 10 percent deposit right now.” |



Stay **Safe.**
Work **Smart.**
Stay **Connected.**

Keeping Employees Safe for All Seasons

by NESPA Staff

Editor's Note: Pool and spa business owners stepped up quickly and effectively when the coronavirus struck the country in March. The industry took decisive actions to protect its employees and customers. Unfortunately, the virus continues to be a threat around the country, and that means smart business owners need to get all employees in the habit of using specific safety protocols.

STAY SAFE. WORK SMART. STAY CONNECTED

Review all jobs and determine which ones can be effectively done remotely. Look at the job roles at your company and determine which jobs need to be handled in the office and which ones can be performed remotely. Fewer employees at the workplace helps with social distancing.

Are you maintaining social distancing at work? Stagger on-site hours and attendance of employees, continuing full or partial work from home assignments where possible. Reassign or reconfigure workplaces to ensure additional room is available. This is especially critical in high-traffic spaces where people meet or interact in tight proximity, such as entranceways, meeting rooms or break rooms. (For your field staff, work with one-truck crews and have assigned times to pick up materials at your warehouse.)

Is the workplace being regularly sanitized? Supply hand sanitizer, cleaning wipes and hand soap for employee use throughout the on-site location. Remind employees to wash hands frequently, disinfect their workspace and practice coughing and sneezing etiquette (CDC: Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues

in the trash. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands.). Prohibit employees from sharing office equipment or work tools without sanitizing/sterilizing in between uses. Implement regular cleaning protocols and consistent deep cleaning protocols.

Provide safety equipment. Cloth masks, particularly N95 masks, help keep the coronavirus out of your workplace.

Are you checking your employees' health? If an employee calls in sick, ADA-covered employers (those companies with 15 or more employees) may ask the employee if he or she is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. If an employee has symptoms at work, send them home immediately. Check temperatures of employees before coming into the workplace. Under the ADA, an employer may choose to administer testing to employees before they enter the workplace to determine whether they have COVID-19. But the tests that you use must be deemed accurate and reliable by public health authorities such as the FDA or the CDC.

Are you maintaining medical privacy? Medical privacy must be maintained, even in the middle of a pandemic.

Employers must maintain all information about employee illness as a confidential medical record in compliance with the ADA. If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, employers should provide only general notice to other employees, shutter and clean the location and follow CDC and local public health guidelines. Employees who worked closely with an individual who became ill should be sent home to quarantine for 14 days since their last exposure to the sick employee.

Are you closely monitoring remote teams? When managing remote teams, set clear guidelines about priorities and deadlines, work hours expected and overall performance goals to be achieved. Communicate regularly and consistently and use video conferencing instead of email and telephone. Make project activities available on shared platforms and make calendars visible to everyone to enable easier access when needed.

Are you calming employee fears about the pandemic? Address employee fears about COVID-19. Explain the procedures that you have implemented, identify contacts within your organization who can respond to questions. Share copies of your written safety protocol.

Consider whether specific coronavirus safety training is appropriate. Stay on top of these processes and make sure everyone is complying. Maintain an open-door policy to hear employee concerns and do your best to address them.

What if an employee refuses to come back to work? If an employee refuses to return to work, first understand why they are refusing to return: Is it a health condition? They may be eligible

for leave under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA) or state laws. Are they caring for someone with COVID-19? They may be eligible for both EPSLA and the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act (EFMLEA) or state mandated leave. Are employees worried about their safety? They may be protected under OSHA or the National Labor Relations Act. |

COVID-19: POOL & SPA INDUSTRY RESOURCES

Visit www.nespapool.org to find COVID-19 Resources for where you work. Including our online resource library that was built for NESPA members by NESPA members to share documents and best practices as we navigate the coronavirus crisis. You will also find state-by-state news for our region.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Pool & Hot Tub Alliance

Our National Association is monitoring action taken by the federal government as well as industry specific resources for members. www.phtacoronaupdate.com

Center for Disease Control (CDC)

The CDC provides the most up-to-date information regarding the coronavirus and safety precautions for at home and at work.

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV

U.S. Small Business Administration

The U.S. Small Business Administration is offering designated states and territories low-interest federal disaster loans for working capital to small businesses suffering substantial economic injury because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

www.sba.gov/coronavirus

Internal Revenue Service

The IRS has established a special section focused on steps to help taxpayers, businesses and others affected by the coronavirus. Their website will be updated as new information is available.

www.irs.gov/coronavirus

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Steering Your Business Through The Pandemic

‘What Could I Do to Make Us Better?’

by Jay Forte

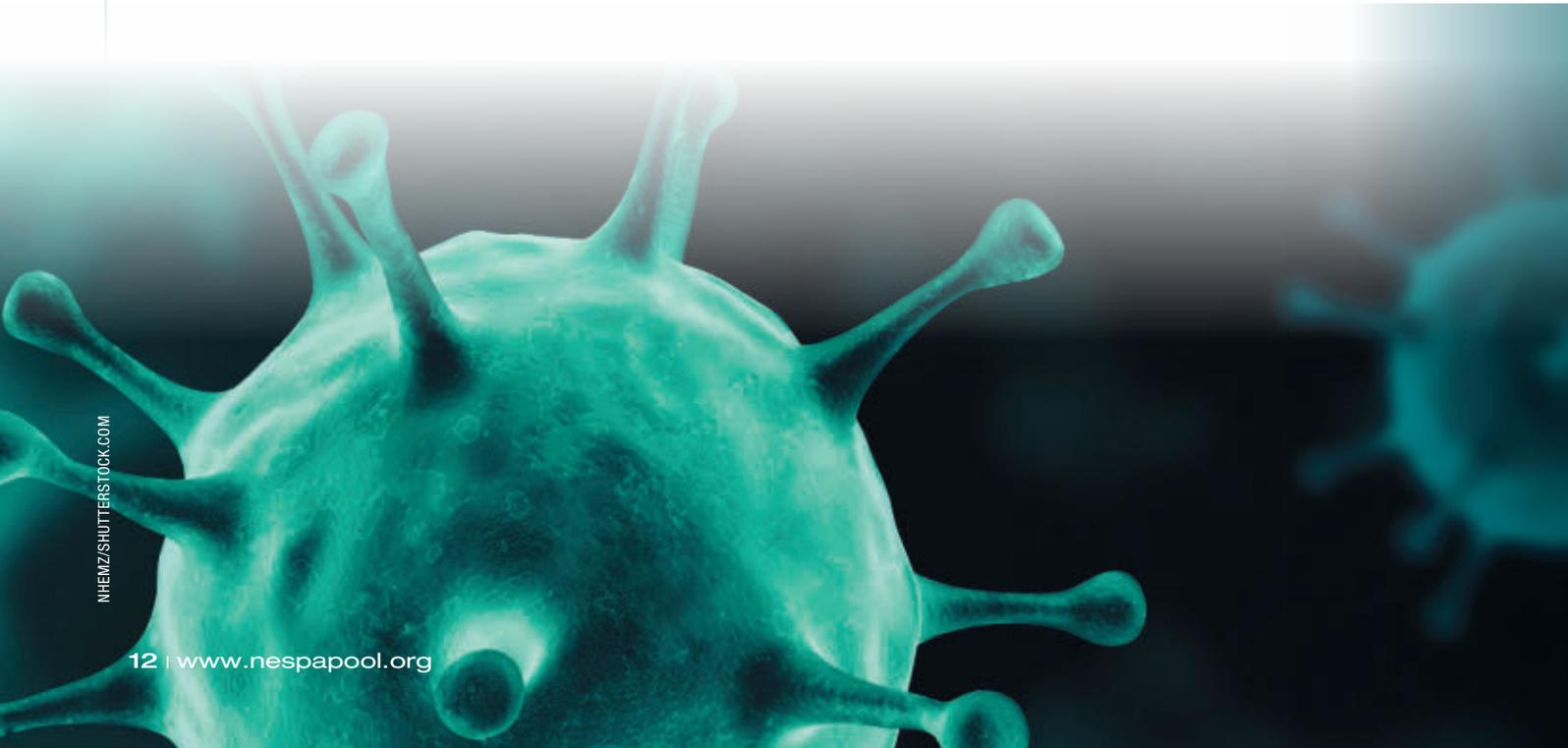
IN THIS PERIOD of global reset, the most productive response (not reaction!) is to use this moment to ask: “What could I do to make us better?” Since change was delivered upon us, stop and notice if you are using this moment to feel fear, anxiety and worry, or have you shifted these emotions to ones of creatively responding, inventing and imagining how your family, life and business could be better?

This is a moment of epic opportunity, seize it! Staying home is preferred over traveling; and whereas so many people have been stuck in their houses, now staying home means they are also in their yards and pools. The pool is the centerpiece of the backyard, so expanding offerings of toys, games, supplies and even above ground pools to quickly create a safe family space will keep the business going.

Here are other tips to help build a stronger business during this time of pandemic:

Above all else, keep everyone safe. It is the responsibility of the business owner to know the minimum safety protection guidelines, assess them and then create a policy/plan for employees, customers and stakeholders. Reach out to everyone to share, teach and enforce the safety protocols. Post placards and posters on doors and other places reminding customers and employees of required safety protocols. Strictly enforce compliance without exception.

For field and warehouse employees, develop a sound and approved safety protocol. This could include staggered shifts,



inventory stored in separate areas by service tech and temporary dividers in the warehouse to keep social distance. Share the protocol and train all employees in it. Be strict about compliance. Any lapses can subject employees to the virus and could affect their health as well as the success of the organization (if it is then required to close).

Determine what jobs can be handled remotely and the best people to do those jobs [see sidebar].

Educate customers on your commitment to safety. Create a video that is hosted on the website and share how the organization is responding to the coronavirus and the safety protocol it is enforcing for its employees, customers and stakeholders. Share your commitment to safety, health and the value of staying well as the first priority. Send out an email to customers and stakeholder that summarizes the procedures, links to the video, and develops and shares the process for customers to come on site if that is part of the sales process.

Augment your staffing needs. Knowing that many people have been laid off or furloughed from their jobs, this is also an ideal time to consider augmenting your staff. A previous 4 percent unemployment rate is now closer to 25 percent, which indicates a greater supply of talent that might be interested in seasonal work. It would get them working again and also accommodate any increases in your business. Consider sending a letter to your customers indicating that you are hiring. You may have customers who have lost their jobs and would be a great addition to your team.

Maintain a strong cash flow. Don't be afraid to do a stronger credit check on new customers. Consider offering a discount for paying in cash or requiring cash/credit card for all services.

Stay on top of any new Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) available to you. As the pandemic lingers, there may still be opportunities to participate in programs to help you keep employees working. Know the details, qualifications and required submission dates of all assistance programs. Build a stronger and more intentional relationship with your bank and accountant to get their assistance in knowing the program details and helping you complete all required applications to qualify.

Reconsider how to sell pool and spa projects. Develop a new sales approach that includes developing strong and dynamic videos and presentations about your products, services and sales process, then follow these steps:

1. Start your connection process with potential customers remotely – on Zoom or online.
2. Develop a customized virtual/video sales response to share with the potential customer.
3. Include an onsite visit to your facility that first explains the safety protocols that will be used to protect the potential customer and the employee, and then meet to talk through final project details.
4. Confirm project commitment, contract, etc. remotely.
5. Schedule the job!

Build a better business. Don't be in a rush to return any part of the industry to what it previously was until you review it and determine it was the best it could be. In our post-pandemic reality, reconstruct for the future, don't just correct the problems of the past. Look at the industry and rebuild something better instead of returning to your old normal.

Keep focused. Keep people safe and develop new opportunities. You have been given an interruption, a pause, a reset. Don't waste it; build something better. |

IDENTIFYING AND SUPPORTING REMOTE EMPLOYEES

We have been hosting programs that share the following guidance:

1. Identify which roles can support the business remotely (First ask: What is our business and how should work be done to deliver to our customers the service response we commit to?)
2. For the roles that can be remote, assess the person by using these criteria:
 - a. Do they have the skills and abilities to do the job?
 - b. Do they have the organization and self-discipline to do the job remotely?
 - c. Do they have the space at home to successfully deliver their required performance expectations?

This will help you wisely look at remote work as a meaningful response for your business. If you have roles that must be remote, then consider the following to help an employee be successful:

- Clearly define the performance expectations so remote employees know what they need to complete each day.
- Increase the frequency of contact between employee and manager. Ask more questions. Be more available.
- Be proactive in conversations to ask about the employee's challenges and blocks to performance.
- Don't miss providing applause and praise for work done well.



Jay Forte, MBA, CPC, GCC, ELI-MP, a former financial executive, is now a business and motivational speaker, certified workplace and CEO coach, author, and nationally ranked thought leader. As president and founder of The Forte Factor LLC, he provides talent and strength-based tools to help people and organizations achieve extraordinary results. Forte is a regular speaker at The Pool & Spa Show in Atlantic City.

50-Ft. Pool/Spa Combo at Lakeside with 25-Ft. Fire Feature

by Ron Derven

THIS MAGNIFICENT POOL/SPA combo won a Gold Medal in NESPA's 2019 Outstanding Achievement Awards competition in the category pool and spa combo concrete.

DESIGNER/BUILDER

The designer/builder of this pool/spa combo is Adam Steele, owner, Steele's Signature Pools, Tabernacle, New Jersey. Steele graduated from Delaware Valley College in Doylestown, PA, with a degree in landscape architecture. He opened a landscaping business soon after graduating, and quickly added high-end pools and spas to his offerings. Now in its 11th year, the firm does 18 high-end pools a year. With a service department as well as new construction, Steele employs eight full-time people.

Steele, a certified diver, also has an underwater leak detection business where he repairs underwater leaks without draining the pool. He noted in a recent interview that he gets 15 to 20 calls a day for leak detection and underwater repairs. Preferring instead to focus on new pool construction, he handles only a few select jobs.

THE PROJECT

The pool and spa shown on these pages is on a one-acre lot overlooking a private lake in Medford, NJ. Previously, the lot contained an old house and pool, which were demolished. In their place are a new house and pool that the homeowner wanted situated in full sunlight all day. Further, the new house has a home office on the second level, which the homeowner wanted to overlook the lake, the property and the pool.

Steele designed a 50-ft. x 18-ft. x 7-1/2-ft. pool, 10-ft. year-around spa, 25-ft.-long custom fire ledge, 8-ft. custom waterfall, a 15-ft. sun ledge and a WetEdge pebble finish interior. The entire project is located 15 ft. above the lake on a 45-degree slope.

PROJECT CHALLENGES

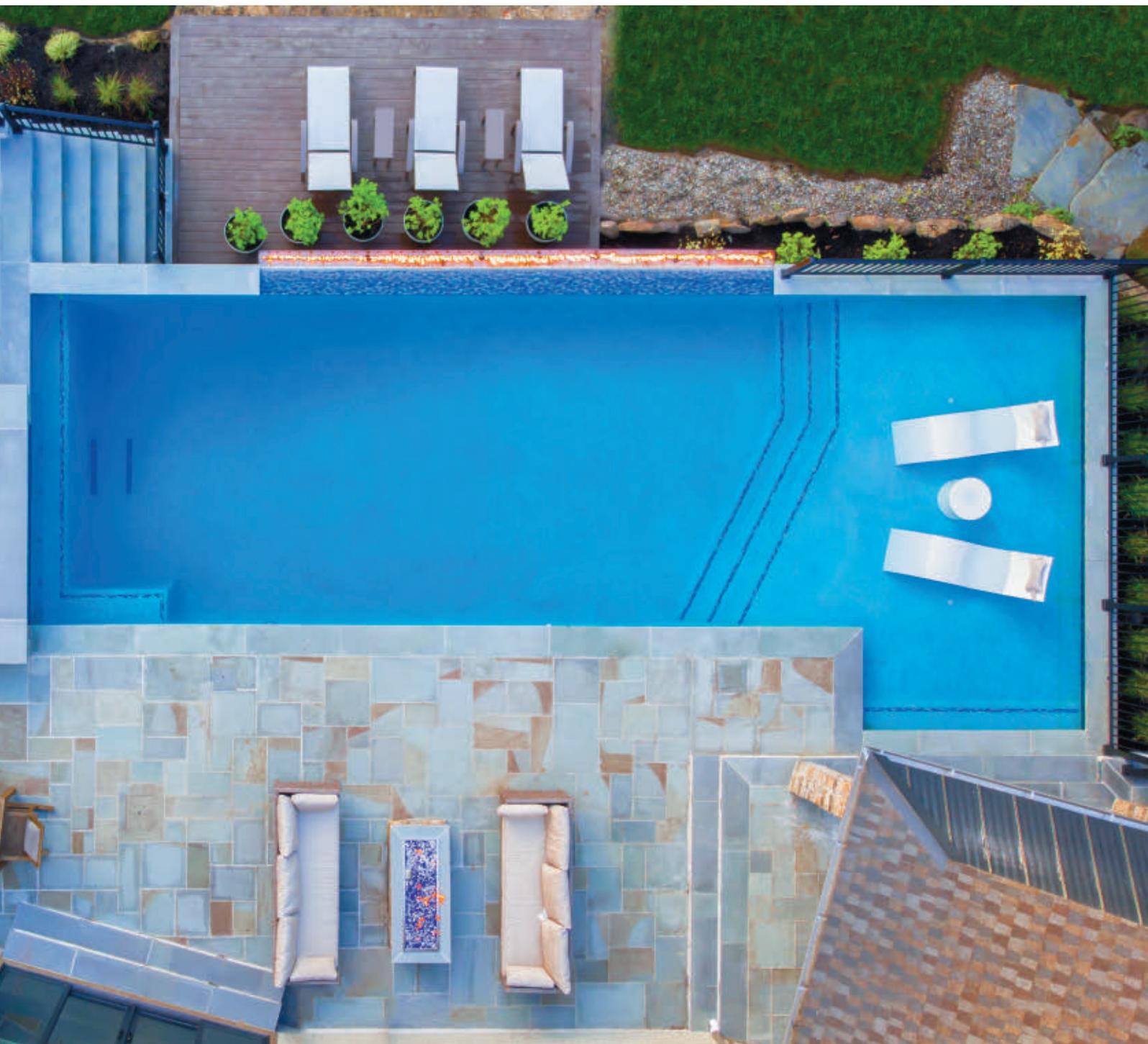
The one-acre site that sloped down to the lake was composed of extremely loose, sandy soil that could not bear the weight of a truck, much less a massive 50-ft. Gunite pool. Steele noted that during construction, "anything with wheels" had to stay on the road at the front of the house while all materials were pumped, hauled or carried to the pool excavation in the back.

Steele removed all of the soft materials and the remains of the old pool (including footings) before construction of



the new pool began. Although the pool was only 7-1/2-ft. deep, he had to excavate down to 11 ft., requiring immediate dewatering. The sand and water from the lake slowed construction somewhat, but Steele was able to finish the project in five months.

The pool was designed using a grade-beam grid with the bottom of the floor of the pool tied together in multiple sections



and multiple layers. The wall facing the lake is freestanding with stone veneer on the outside.

Although the house and pool were built around the same time, the crawl space containing the pool pad and equipment was constructed and enclosed early in the project before the pool equipment could be installed. With only a 2-ft. by 4-ft. access door into the crawl space, all equipment had to be

disassembled, dragged into the tight space, then reassembled and installed. The pool equipment installation was challenging, and pool servicing continues to be a challenge for Steele's service people.

The decking around the pool is blue stone. According to Steele, the company had to pour a 2-ft. thick base of concrete around the pool to support the blue stone and deck activities

due to the steep grade. The base for the deck and the retaining wall were done in a monolithic concrete pour, which required 120 yards of concrete. The deck is approximately 1,000 square feet.

One main reason Steele was selected for the project was his ability to construct large, customized fire features. The fire feature on this pool is built on the lake side so that pool-goers can look through it at night to the lake beyond. Steele's expertise in custom fire features began with smaller off-the-shelf fire features, and evolved into custom-made fire features. As time passed, the custom fire features grew in length. This one is 18 ft. long, but he has since built one 30-ft. long on a just-completed pool. The biggest challenge of building large fire features, said Steele, is educating the building inspectors, who have never seen such equipment before.

Originally, the pool wall containing the large fire feature was to be an infinity-edge wall. However Steele did not have space for the catch basins below due to zoning restrictions. Instead, he created what he called a "fake infinity-edge wall." The water in the pool seems to flow over the wall, but instead is captured in drains at the top of the wall below the fire feature.

"This pool required a lot of variance work and a lot of convincing of the building inspectors because they had never seen a fire ledge this big or this long," explained Steele. "They wanted to be taught how the fire feature worked before we could get a permit."

The pool features a bluestone and Gunitite natural-looking waterfall that is 8 feet wide. The sundeck is located off of the enclosed patio, perfect for socializing or simply whiling away the hours on a summer's day. |



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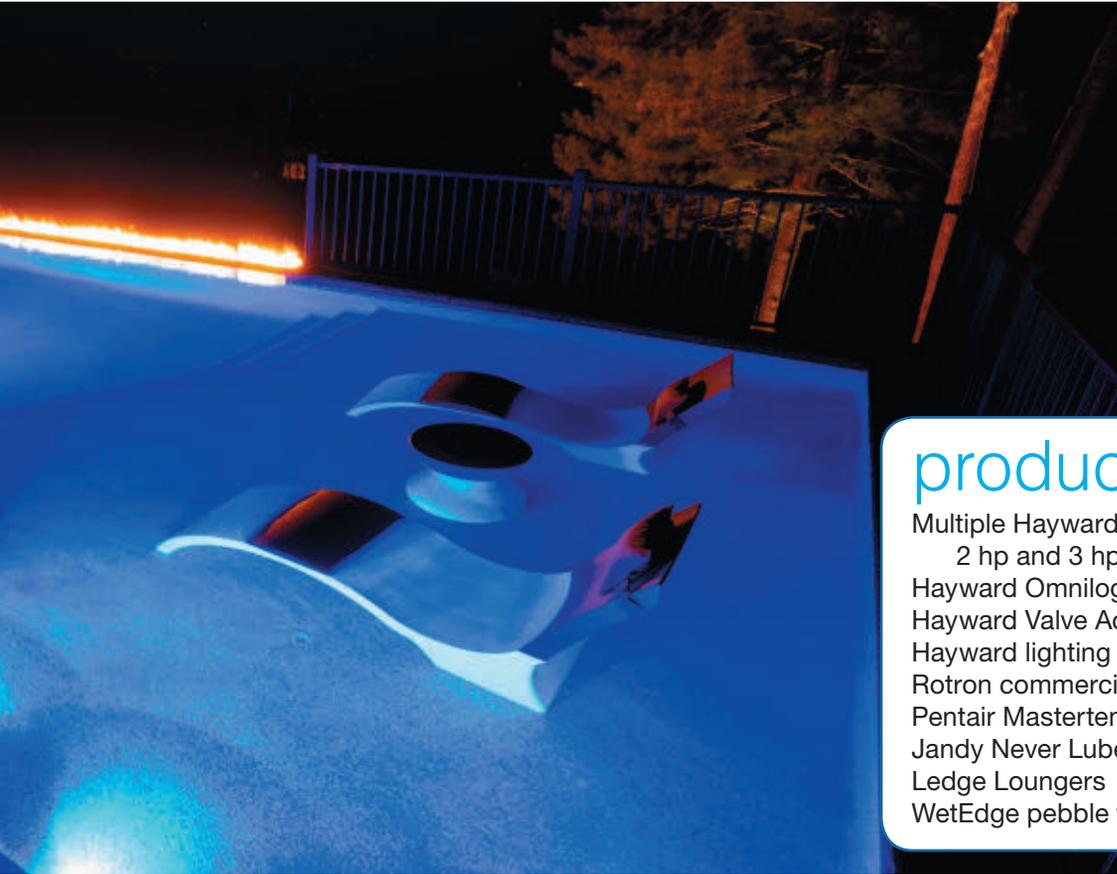
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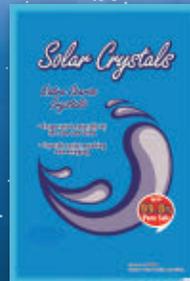


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Maintaining a Safe Commercial Pool Environment

THE COUNCIL FOR the Model Aquatic Health Code (CMAHC) recently presented a webinar titled “Operating Public Swimming Pools” to help pool operators and local health departments keep these facilities safe and coronavirus-free. The webinar including comments by Dewey Case, CMAHC technical director; Michele Hlavska, RN, MPH, CDC Chief of Healthy Swimming; and Jennifer Murphy, PhD, WASH team lead, Community Intervention and At Risk Task Force, CDC COVID-19 Response.

The insights shared during the presentation will be helpful for the opening, operating and maintaining of commercial pools this season and beyond. Those working on commercial pools should be sure to review specific requirements and procedures developed by state and local health departments as well.



Michele Hlavsa offered key strategies for: promoting behaviors that help prevent the spread of COVID-19; maintaining healthy environments; maintaining healthy operations; and preparing for when someone gets sick.

PROMOTING BEHAVIORS THAT PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

Hlavsa offered these suggestions to reduce the spread of COVID-19 at aquatic facilities:

- *Practice hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.* Encourage all staff, patrons, and swimmers to wash their hands often and cover their coughs and sneezes.
- *Wear cloth face coverings when feasible (not in the water!).* Face coverings are most essential in times when physical distancing is difficult.
- *Stay home when sick.* Tell staff, patrons and swimmers to stay home if: they feel sick, have tested positive for COVID-19, or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days.
- *Ensure adequate supplies.* Support healthy hygiene with adequate supplies. Supplies include soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues and no-touch trash cans.
- *Post signs and broadcast messages about stopping the spread of COVID-19.* Use email, facility PA systems and social media to get the message out.

MAINTAINING HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

Hlavsa noted it was critical to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least once a day to maintain a healthy environment. All shared surfaces, however, must be cleaned after each use.

She recommended that a system be set up so that furniture (for example, lounge chairs) that needs to be cleaned and disinfected is kept separate from already cleaned and disinfected furniture. Also, label containers for used equipment not yet cleaned and other containers for equipment that has been cleaned.

Ventilation equipment for indoor facilities must be operating properly,

Hlavsa added. It is a good idea to increase the amount of air circulating from the outside by opening doors, using fans and other methods so long at the opening of windows and doors does not create a hazard for staff, patrons and swimmers.

Other suggestions:

- Check water systems if the facility has been shut down for a long period to minimize the risk of Legionnaire's disease.
- Modify deck layouts to ensure social distancing of at least six feet by providing physical cues or guides (for example, lane lines in the water or chairs and tables on the deck) and visual cues (for example, tape on the decks, floors or sidewalks) and signs to ensure that staff, patrons and swimmers stay at least six feet apart from those they don't live with, both in and out of the water.
- Stagger use of communal spaces (for example, in the water or breakroom).
- Discourage the sharing of objects that are difficult to clean or that come in contact with the face, including goggles, nose clips and snorkels. Discourage the sharing of items such as food, equipment, toys and supplies among people who do not live together.
- Ensure adequate equipment for patrons and swimmers (such as kick boards and pool noodles) to minimize sharing to the extent possible, or limit use of equipment by one group of users at a time and clean and disinfect between uses.

MAINTAINING HEALTHY OPERATIONS

Hlavsa suggested protecting vulnerable staff by offering such options as telework or modified job responsibilities. Limit people at the pool to only staff, patrons and swimmers who live locally. Staff or rotate shifts to limit the number of staff present at the pool at the same time. If actively lifeguarding, lifeguards should not be expected to also monitor handwashing, face coverings, social distancing and other requirements.

Before altering the pool or equipment, check with the company or engineer that designed the pool.

Designate a staff member to be responsible for responding to COVID-19

Commercial Pool Openings



Q: Will UV rays inactivate the coronavirus?

A: Viruses are inactivated by UV rays. UV could be an extra element that will inactivate a virus, but it should not be relied upon as the main way. UV rays can vary depending on cloud cover.

Q: Will pool water with 1-2 ppm of chlorine inactivate the coronavirus?

A: From all indications, pool water will inactivate the virus, but it may take several minutes to achieve that inactivation.

Q: Can coronavirus infect someone in a pool or lake or is there a strong dilution factor with pools and lakes that would prevent infection?

A: The main exposure to coronavirus is through person-to-person transmission via droplets. There is a huge coronavirus dilution factor when it comes to pools and lakes.

Q: Should lifeguards use PPE [personal protective equipment]?

A: It is recommended that lifeguards wear a mask while on the lifeguard stand, although it would have to be removed for water rescues. There have been references to using face shields; however, face shields do not prevent aerosols from moving around and infecting people. Face shields function as a splash guard. A face mask will do more good in protecting a person from infection.

Q: What about disinfecting lifeguard stations?

A: It comes down to focusing on the high-touch areas. The staff needs to be protected as much as the general public. It is important to have a schedule in place of what equipment must be disinfected. Assigning one rescue tube per lifeguard per shift will reduce contact points between people. If you are using shared equipment, it must be cleaned between uses.

Q: What about using ventilations in CPR?

A: CPR for lifeguards still includes ventilations.

Q: What about performing rescues?

A: If you allow bathers into your facility, you must be prepared to perform rescues. It is recommended that your resuscitating equipment be equipped with HEPA filters.

Q: Should lifeguards use personal resuscitation masks?

A: We have seen a shift from personal resuscitation masks to bag valve masks (BVMs) to reduce contact.

Q: What about training for new lifeguards?

A: Some aspects of lifeguard training will be hard to do while social distancing rules are in place. We have seen some effective efforts where agencies have combined blended learning and online options. Some agencies and some organizations are using water rescue mannequins.

Q: What are the recommendations from CDC on reopening spas?

A: If the spa has been closed and idle for a long time, drain the spa or hot tub, refill it and run about 20 ppm of chlorine for 10 hours. If the hot tub has a history of Legionnaires Disease, it must be tested before reopening. Contact your local health department.

Q: If a sick person had come in contact with a surface, why wait 24 hours to clean surfaces?

A: Waiting 24 hours for the droplets to settle is for the protection of the person doing the cleaning.

concerns. All staff should know who this person is and how to contact him or her.

Avoid group events, gatherings or meetings both in and out of the water if social distancing of at least six feet between people who don't live together cannot be maintained, said Hlavsa, who added that the exceptions are rescuing a distressed swimmer, providing first aid, performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation or evacuating the facility.

Facilities must develop a strong communications system so that: (1) staff, patrons and swimmers can self-report if they have symptoms of COVID-19, report if they have a positive test for COVID-19 or were exposed to someone with the virus; (2) staff, patrons and swimmers can be notified in case of possible exposure to someone at the facility with COVID-19 or facility closures.

Develop a strong training program and teach staff members all safety protocols. Train staff to recognize signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE GETS SICK

To prepare for when someone gets sick, said Hlavsa, operators of public pools should:

- Immediately separate staff, patrons or swimmers with COVID-19 symptoms

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(for example, fever, cough, or shortness of breath).

- Establish procedures to safely isolate and transport anyone sick to their home or to a health care provider.
- Notify local health officials and close contacts.
- Immediately notify staff, patrons and swimmers of any case of COVID-19, while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Inform those who have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms, and follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop.

As for cleaning and disinfecting, closing off areas used by a sick person and not using the areas until after cleaning and disinfecting is complete was suggested. Hlavska urged waiting more than 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting these areas. |

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'Tis the Season to Sell Pool & Spa Upgrades

by Sean Assam



FOR MANY OF your customers who have been self-isolating at home for months, the backyard swimming pool has been a blessing, keeping the family happy, healthy and occupied. But with this renewed focus on the backyard and the pool, many homeowners might be scrutinizing their energy bills and pool chemical usage more closely this year, which is an excellent opportunity for you, the pool professional, to help them lower

their costs starting this season and for many seasons to come.

Selling upgrades does not require that you or your field tech people become super salespeople. Rather, it is a matter of understanding what your customers' needs are and then filling them. You can discover their needs by simply asking open-ended questions; questions that cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no."

When servicing a pool, often you or your pool tech wants to service the account and move on to the next job; at the pool store, often the person behind the counter wants to test the water, sell the homeowner chemicals, cash them out and get on to the next customer.

I have been in customer service for many years and have come to appreciate that people need to feel that they are your most important customer. They want your attention. They want to be listened to. We all need to make sure we are giving them the time and attention that they fully deserve. By paying attention to our customers and by training both our field and retail staff to do the same, we will deliver great customer service and help boost the bottom line with added sales.

WHAT DOES THE CUSTOMER LIKE ABOUT THE POOL?

Listen to what you customer likes and dislikes about his or her pool. If they complain about high gas bills, introduce them to the heat pump to replace or supplement that aging gas guzzling heater to save on energy costs. Heat pump manufacturers have taken it a step further and introduced the pool industry's first variable speed heat pump. We saw the success of variable-speed pumps and the variable-speed home air conditioner, and knew it was time for a variable-speed swimming pool heat pump. With growing concerns about environmental impacts from burning fossil fuels, a variable-speed heat pump makes a lot of sense.

Regarding heat pumps, a complaint (and a big opportunity) that seems to be heard more frequently each season is that: "the pool is like being in a bathtub." In recent years,



we have had summer seasons that are the hottest on record. To help these customers, a heat pump that serves to cool the pool water, or a dedicated Chiller Heat Pump is in order and would be greatly appreciated with each cool, refreshing swim.

While you are helping them cut their gas bills, help save them more money by getting rid of that electricity-wasting single-speed pump that seems to run constantly. Replace it with an elegant, energy-miser variable-speed model. Both pieces of equipment are cost effective with a quick, demonstrable payback.

A salt-chlorine generator could also save your customers time, money and effort. It is a highly convenient and cost-effective way to add chlorine to the pool, while making a lot less trips to the pool store. While you can generate your own chlorine on site, you will still need to maintain your water chemistry, and especially maintain the water balance according to the saturation index to prevent scale from forming in the cell. A salt pool is a chlorine pool.

Another area where the stay-at-home family might need a real upgrade is pool automation. Customers want and are quickly adding complete automation to their homes. They want their pools automated as well. The summer and fall of 2020 is a great time to do just that. For customers opting

for automatic controllers, the trend has gone past the antiquated in-house panel or the hand-held wireless controller (that often goes missing) and on to computer access and phone apps.

The issue with automation controllers is the high cost to control all the equipment. Variable-speed pumps no longer need automation, as the speeds are programmed directly on the pump, but colored light options, water features, heater temperatures and pool/spa diverter valves still need automation. Having a dedicated phone app is becoming more desirable to single app automation for multiple-components. AquaCal AutoPilot Inc.'s Pool Sync Wi-Fi system is very cost effective so that anyone can get a high level of automation for their AquaCal heat pump and soon-to-be-released AutoPilot salt system at a reasonable price.

Don't limit upgrades to heat pumps, variable-speed pumps, pH feeder systems and salt-chlorine generators. With families spending more time at the pool, it could well be time to upgrade to a high-quality deck with beautiful travertine, marble or porcelain pavers, coping and accent stone veneers. This upgrade improves the look and longevity of the pool area.

During this time of self-isolation, do not overlook adding a beautiful outdoor kitchen to your customer's backyard oasis.

Don't think you can sell and build this yourself? There are custom, pre-built kits available from BackyardXpo.com, that are easier to assemble than the IKEA Pax Wardrobe!

In addition to promoting the sale of upgraded products, push for a longer pool and spa season this year as well. A pool that is being used is good for everyone. If they are using the pool (customers are happy), toys

and chemicals will be needed (retail stores are happy), pools will still need to be cleaned (service companies are happy) and new equipment may be sold (manufacturers are happy). It is an old habit to open the pool around Memorial Day weekend and then close it right after Labor Day Weekend when the kids go back to school. During this time of pandemic, no one knows when or how the kids will return to school

or when parents will go back to work at the office. During this time of home schooling, shutdowns and limited students in school, it is a good idea to extend the pool season. |

Sean Assam is national accounts and commercial product manager, AquaCal AutoPilot Inc., and a frequent speaker at The Pool & Spa Show in Atlantic City.



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SANITATION

products directory

Editor's Note: If you are looking for new sanitation products and equipment resources to keep pool and spa water sparkling and the areas around the pool clean and safe, look no further than this directory that contains selected companies supplying products to pool and spa companies here in the Northeast.

ALTERNATIVE SANITIZERS

ClearBlue Ionizer, Mississauga, ON, Canada
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Clear Comfort, Boulder, CO
ClearBlue Ionizer, Mississauga, ON, Canada
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Minneapolis, MN
Frog Products, Hopkins, MN
MicroPlasma Ozone, Champaign, IL
Ouster Water Solutions, Scottsdale, AZ
Paramount Pool & Spa Systems, Chandler, AZ
PoolRx Worldwide, Irvine, CA
San Juan Products, Lakeland, FL
Silk Balance, Bellingham, WA
Solaxx, LLC, Boynton Beach, FL
Waters Choice, Inc., Boise, ID

CHEMICAL FEEDERS

Blue-White Industries, Huntington Beach, CA
Frog Products, Hopkins, MN
IPS Controllers, Temecula, CA
Ouster Water Solutions, Scottsdale, AZ
Poolstar Pool Products, Ningbo, China
Rola-Chem/Paradise Ind., St. Paul, MN
Stenner Pump Company, Jacksonville, FL

CHEMICALS, POOLS

Accu-Care Supply, Rumford, RI
API Water, Juniper, FL
AquaFinesse USA/Clearon Corp.,
South Charleston, WV
AquaSalt, Houston, TX
Backyard Brands, Inc., Lebanon, IN
Bel-Aqau, New Rochelle, NY
BioLab, Inc./NC Brands, Lawrenceville, GA
Buckman's, Pottstown, PA
Certol International, LLC, Commerce City, CO
Chemical Equipment Labs, Wilmington, DE
Chemtrol, Santa Barbara, CA
Earth Science Labs, Rogers, AR
East Coast Salt, Jackson, NJ
Easy Care Products, Fresno, CA
Green Story Pool & Spa, Charlotte, NC

Hackik, Aston, PA
Haviland Pool & Spa Products,
Grand Rapids, MI
InSPARation, Moorpark, CA
Jack's Magic, Largo, FL
N. Jonas, Bensalem, PA
Oreq Corporation, Temecula, CA
Ouster Water Solutions, Scottsdale, AZ
Oxygen Pools, Boynton Beach, FL
Periodic Products, Ft. Lauderdale, FL
Phoenix Products, Terryville, CT
Pool Trol Products (Qualco, Inc.), Passaic, NJ
Pool Corp., Covington, LA
PoolRx Worldwide, Irvine, CA
Sigura, Alpharetta, GA
SunGuard, Aston, PA
Taylor Technologies, Inc., Sparks, MD
Waters Choice, Inc., Boise, ID
Waterlines, North Haven, CT

CHEMICALS, SPAS

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InSPARation, Moorpark, CA
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Phoenix Products, Terryville, CT
Pool Trol Products (Qualco, Inc.), Passaic, NJ
PoolRx Worldwide, Irvine, CA
Serum Watercare, The Villages, FL
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AquaGuard Pool Systems, Aston, PA
AQUASALT, LLC, Houston, TX
BioLab, Inc./NC Brands, Lawrenceville, GA
Blue-White Industries, Huntington Beach, CA
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Haviland Pool & Spa Products, Grand Rapids, MI
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Industrial Test Systems, Inc., Rock Hill, SC
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Pool Trol Products (Qualco, Inc.), Passaic, NJ

sanitation products directory (cont'd)

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 Surpass Chemical Co. Inc, Albany, NY
 Taylor Technologies, Inc., Sparks, MD
 The Promark Group, Westport, CT
 United Mineral & Chemical Corporation,
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 Jetstream of Houston, Houston, TX
 Maytronics US, Inc., Norcross, GA
 NLB Corp., Wixom, MI
 Oreq Corporation, Temecula, CA
 Piranha Pool Products, Murrieta, CA
 Poolmaster, Inc., Sacramento, CA
 Primate Pool Tools, Poway, CA

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 Riviera Beach, FL
 Roll-N-Vac, Vestal, NY
 Skimlite Mfg., Salinas, CA
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 Backyard Brands, Inc., Lebanon, IN

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 ClearBlue Ionizer, Mississauga,
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 CMP, Newnan, GA
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 Minneapolis, MN
 Frog Products, Hopkins, MN
 MicroPlasma Ozone, Champaign, IL
 Neptune-Benson,
 Evoqua Water Technologies, Coventry, RI
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 Oxygen Pools, Boynton Beach, FL
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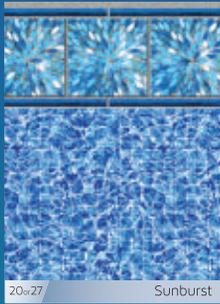
CNA Risk Control experts know that with multiple workers on the job, there is an increased risk of something slipping through the cracks. That's why they recommend all pool and spa contractors incorporate a daily inspection into their worksite checklist. It's a policy that delivers peace of mind throughout the construction process, while also minimizing costly claims.

Learn how our risk control programs help NESPA members avoid troubled waters. Contact your independent agent or visit cna.com/nespa.

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20x27 Sunburst



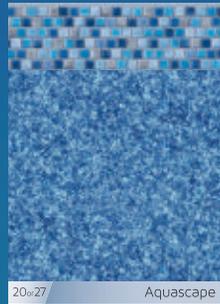
20 Electra



20x27 Harlequin



NEW 20x27 Brooklyn



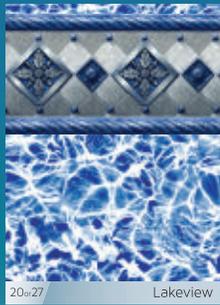
20x27 Aquascape



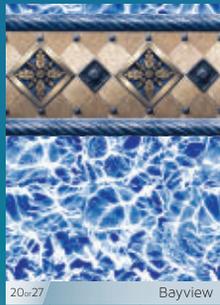
20x27 Twilight



NEW 20x27 Waveburst



20x27 Lakeview



20x27 Bayview



20x27 Blue Opal



20x27 Diamond



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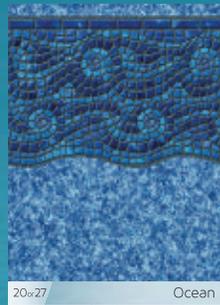
20x27 Rocklyn



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