

My Take: Spring Is On The Way...Whatcha' Been Up To?

Written by Jane Alexander, Editor-In-Chief
Monday, 15 February 2010 10:39



The lake next to our home is frozen solid. I've been slipping and sliding out to my old Jeep each morning—*and all the way back again each night*—for what seems like way too long.

Here it is, the day after this year's (to my way of thinking) super-exciting Super Bowl. We're on standby in Chicagoland for yet another substantial snowfall accompanied by "blizzard quality" winds. I hate to complain, though, about the brutality of it all, given the monster snow- and ice-events that have whipped across the South and East of late. Folks up here are supposed to be accustomed to frigid conditions and everything they bring. I am not.

A transplanted South-Texan, I'm totally out of my league when it comes to harsh winters. Having spent most of my life in a semitropical climate with a year-round growing season, as far as I'm concerned, springtime anywhere can never come too soon. That's why I've been seriously checking and double-checking the giant willow trees outside our windows daily—*for weeks and weeks*—looking for a little hint of new green life. The farmer's daughter in me knows that those buds have got to be in there somewhere, getting ready to get down to business in a big way.

I'm not just hopeful; I'm confident. It's something that's kept me going through the long, dark, dreary, messy days of winter ever since I moved up this way several years ago. And, now, for the point of this column: My certainty that nature will eventually reawaken each spring is not much different than the palpable belief in a coming economic recovery that I've recently been sensing (and hearing about) with more and more suppliers to industry. They know that better times, like the coming spring, are just around the corner, and that their organizations need to be getting ready to get down to business in a real big way!

Sensing and hearing about this confidence is one thing. Actually seeing it is another. That's what I had the pleasure of doing down in Concord, NC, the first week of February. Despite a horrendous ice storm that had shut down much of the region around Charlotte a couple of days earlier, I, along with editors from several other publications, joined Ingersoll Rand (which had just hosted hundreds of its distributors and sales team members) for what the company was calling an "Innovation Showcase." While there, we learned about a number of things the company had been doing as the recession raged. Remarkably, it introduced 50 new products in 2009. Spell that "fifty." New compressors and compressor components, filtration technologies, pumps, lubrication-related devices, controllers, tools, services, etc., all of these new offerings are aimed at giving you exactly what you've been telling us for a long time—*and what you have been telling Ingersoll Rand in extensive user surveys*—that you've been looking for: improved reliability, efficiency and productivity. (As an example, see this month's Solution Spotlight on page 44.)

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Clearly, Ingersoll Rand is not the only company that's been working away through the downturn to have in-demand-type capacity-assurance solutions ready for the marketplace come spring—*make that "as better times begin to roll."*

We'll try to bring more of them to your attention, soon. In the meantime, what have you and your company been doing to gear up for "spring?" Let us know!

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