Written by Jane Alexander, Editor-In-Chief
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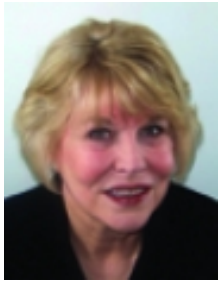

Happy New Year! I have some real good news for you. But first, the bad…The perfect storm that's been brewing with regard to the dwindling labor pool and the loss of so many skilled, knowledgeable, experienced craftspeople from the workforce is about to blow.

This isn't just me talking. Let me quote one of my favorite industry experts (and yours):

"Statistics on the issue abound, including this: The Employment Policy Foundation (EPF) projects that we'll suffer an 80% skill loss over the next 10 years as the Baby Boomer generation officially becomes eligible for retirement. We must recognize that a large percentage of those skilled jobs will be lost forever—and that the remaining workforce will be expected to absorb and cope with the devastating results. The clock is ticking faster and faster…"

These chilling words come directly from the first installment of contributing editor Ken Bannister's new column running every other month under the banner of " Don't Procrastinate…Innovate! " in Maintenance Technology (MT) magazine. According to Ken, we shouldn't look to government to legislate us out of the danger we're in. Who knows what that might entail? He says it's going to take some real innovation on the part of our industries— *and the individuals now working in them* —for us to survive the killer storm that is bearing down on us. We at Applied Technology Publications (ATP), parent of both MT and Lubrication Management & Technology (LMT), and the Maintenance & Reliability Technology Summit (MARTS) have heard the message loud and clear. Moreover, we're going to put some real money where our editorial "mouth" is.

Along with Ken's new MT column, we're launching the "Maintenance & Reliability Innovator of the Year Award" program—*and the good news for you is that it's open to those in the lubrication community!* The competition will allow you to "pass on" and share your successful innovative gizmos, gadgets, procedures, methods and ideas with others in the maintenance and reliability arena. Additional details will come in future issues of both MT and LMT. In the meantime, though, you can learn more about the topic by going online and reading "Tick-Tock: Time To Innovate!"

Please note that Ken is issuing a challenge to all maintenance and reliability professionals—*including you on the lube side of the house*—to put on your innovative-thinking caps. There's no time to waste, he says: "Begin writing down whatever improvement ideas you have and prepare yourself for a wave of innovation as we explore ideas to help us make it through our perfect storm." I agree. It's time to get going!

By the way, on behalf of all of us at Applied Technology Publications, let me take this space to thank you for your past support. We look forward to serving your lubrication-information needs for many years to come! **LMT**

jalexander@atpnetwork.com

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