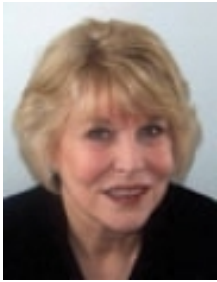


My Take: Making A Change Or Two In Direction

Written by Jane Alexander, Editor-In-Chief
Friday, 14 September 2012 13:35



I began writing this month's column as a reminder to the innovators out there that you still have time to enter the *2012 Maintenance & Reliability Innovator of the Year Award* competition. The words were coming together well until an indecisive Hurricane Isaac decided to hunker down on the New Orleans area. Amid the post-landfall news reports was an item involving the maintenance and reliability of a mature technology. Riveting my attention for several hours, it changed the direction I originally wanted my September message to take.

You probably heard the same story, an account of the Plaquemines Parish pump operators who, because of rising waters, were forced to leave their pump station and seek refuge atop a levee for a while. Thank goodness for them, their families, their friends and Plaquemines Parish that they were rescued.

Thanks goodness, too, for the pump industry—*it can't afford to lose any skilled, dedicated pump pros.*

I should know: I began hearing about and covering the pump workforce crisis long before I came to *Maintenance Technology*

(in 2005). If my memory serves me correctly, the pump community has been lamenting the loss of its treasured "old pump guys" since the mid-1990s (if not before). Even back then, it knew there weren't enough knowledgeable/experienced young "pump guys" and "pump gals" coming in to meet industry's need.

As with other workforce gaps, problems related to the development of new generations of pump professionals are often blamed on the lack of practical knowledge transfer and hands-on training in critical skills—*just what the "old pump guys" across industry conveyed and nurtured in their facilities.*

A number of interested parties have been working feverishly for years to take up the slack. They include the major OEMs, the Hydraulic Institute, the Fluid Sealing Association, colleges and universities (typically Land Grant) and individual distributors. It's an ongoing slog.

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One of the best-known pump training resources is the Texas A&M (TAMU) TURBOLAB, home of the *Turbomachinery* and *International Pump Users Symposia*. (This month marks TAMU's 41st *Turbomachinery Symposium* and its 28th *Pump Symposium*.)

) Whether it's offering training in College Station, Houston or the Middle East, this Texas-based educational initiative has always been a mover and shaker in the development of pump technologies and the skills to manage them.

If your team would prefer to move in a different direction on pump training this fall, check out the next installment of another popular, long-running event: Set for Oct. 11 in the Philadelphia area (Aston, PA), it's the *9th Mid-Atlantic Pump & Process Equipment Symposium*, presented by the Baltimore-based Geiger Pump & Equipment Company. I was thrilled to be among the many pump lovers attending the first of these skill-building events. I've been thrilled to watch them grow ever since. Still offered FREE of charge, the hands-on training (pump teardowns, rebuilds, seal replacements, etc.) with experts from ITT Goulds Pumps, Viking and John Crane, among others, is not to be missed (nor is Geiger's legendary hospitality). Popularity does have its downside, however: Seats are limited. To see if you can still snag one, go to

<http://geigerinc.com>.

MT

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P.S. Next month, I'll return to the topic of the 2012 Maintenance & Reliability Innovator Award and its sponsors, including the innovators of ScaleWatcher. For now, turn to pg. 14 for Ken Bannister's take on it.