

Waterjetting and the WJTA 50 YEARS AND BEYOND

As MPW celebrates 50 years of advancing waterjetting for industrial cleaning use, General Manager and Waterjet Technology Association President **Jimmy Peck** looks to the future of not only the WJTA, but industrial cleaning waterjet technology as a whole.

Waterjetting was originally used for hydraulic mining during the 1850 Gold Rush in California. "Waterjetting is still a major

part of the mining industry," Peck said. As waterjetting technology improved, so did its uses, including fragmenting solids, separating coatings from solids and precisely cutting and machining solids.

In fact, Peck said the WJTA was formed in 1983,

coinciding with the introduction of abrasive waterjet cutting technology; however, today the WJTA focuses on waterjet cleaning. "The WJTA is really a trade association for the industrial cleaning business," he said.

Peck said the WJTA is working to broaden its scope beyond waterjetting to include tradespeople from every aspect of the industrial cleaning business, such as those in the industrial vacuuming

industry. "The name (WJTA) is restrictive, and we're not going to change it, but we need to include all aspects of the industrial cleaning business," Peck said. "The WJTA is going to be more inclusive."

Looking to the future of the industry, Peck said advancement of industrial cleaning waterjetting technology depends upon it meeting several challenges, the first being equipment set up and tear down time.

"There's a lot of automation out there," Peck said. "That turns off some customers."

Some customers are concerned with the amount of time it takes to set up automated systems and will request the older methods. "We'll see more flexibility in hands-free tools to make set up and tear down easier," he said.

Another challenge is creating a waterjet with the flexibility to fit into tight spaces around equipment that cannot be removed for cleaning. Peck said some industrial equipment is currently taken from site and cleaned on a blast pad when

necessary; however, some equipment simply can't be moved or removed from service.

He said hands-free cleaning equipment effectively cleans permanently fixed industrial gear, but a custom-sized waterjet may be required to fit into the space around it. "You almost need a separate tool for each job," Peck said. "It's hard to have a one-size-fits-all tool."

Finally, there's the challenge of making hands-free industrial cleaning waterjets truly hands-free. Peck said even the most hands-free system requires some amount of direct control from an operator.

He believes the technology will progress to the point where not only will hands-free waterjets operate completely independently, but they will also automatically report when the job is finished as well as any problems the waterjet experienced during the job.

"I think they'll get that smart," Peck said.



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