

# IRON STRONG INSIGHTS<sup>®</sup>

WINTER 2026



## McWANE DUCTILE

BUILDING IRON STRONG UTILITIES FOR GENERATIONS<sup>®</sup>



Are Your Water  
and Wastewater  
Specifications Keeping  
Up With Change?

PG. 4

### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

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**McWANE  
DUCTILE**

Contact Us: [McWaneDuctile.com](http://McWaneDuctile.com)

Mike Dodge, VP Sales & Marketing  
Stuart Liddell, Sales Operations Manager  
Andrea Kubik, Marketing Manager

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**IRON STRONG INSIGHTS<sup>®</sup>**

*McWane Ductile has been an industry leader in the manufacture of water distribution and infrastructure products since 1921. With three U.S. foundries, McWane Ductile offers superior service while supplying Ductile iron pipe across North America and beyond, all while maintaining an unwavering commitment to safety and quality. Through continued innovation, it is our goal to meet the customer needs and industry demands of the future in order to Build Iron Strong Utilities for Generations.*

**Are Your Water  
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**PG. 4**

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Welcome to the Winter 2026 Edition of

# Iron Strong Insights®

Dear Readers,

**Winter is officially here, bringing with it colder days, cozy moments, and a chance to slow down just a bit. As the year settles into its quieter season, we are happy to welcome you to our Winter edition of Iron Strong Insights.**

This time of year naturally invites reflection and an opportunity to look back at what we have accomplished together. Inside this issue, you will find stories worth celebrating and ideas worth sharing with others. These wins and memorable moments would not be possible without the dedication of our people and the investments in our facilities that help us meet the needs of our customers. It is a chance to appreciate the effort, creativity, and teamwork that carried us through the year.

It is also the time of year when we can take a breather before things pick up again and we begin to think ahead of what is coming next. Winter is about preparation. While things may slow down on the surface, important work continues behind the scenes, setting the stage for the months ahead. With that in mind, our feature article focuses on the importance of reviewing specifications to ensure they are up to date with the latest changes in the industry.

As always, we would like to say thanks to our readers and to the people that make the waterworks industry their career. Wherever you are and however you are spending this season, we hope this Winter issue brings a bit of warmth and enjoyment to your day. Here is to a safe winter season and an even stronger, IronStrong 2026 ahead.

Sincerely,



**Stuart Liddell**  
Sales Operations Manager  
Sales Operations Department



## BOARD APPOINTEES



**Tom Crawford**, Vice President and General Manager of McWane Ductile, will join the American Foundry Society board of directors. Tom will begin his four-year term in April 2026, serving with industry leaders from across North America. AFS is the only organization

representing the entire \$50 billion metalcasting industry, supporting all metals and processes with a strong focus on advocacy, education and innovation.

It is widely recognized for publishing Modern Casting and Casting Source magazines and for hosting Metalcasting Congress and CastExpo — the largest metalcasting trade events in North America. These initiatives play a critical role in advancing technology, workforce development and policy advocacy for the foundry industry.

“I’m honored to join the board of directors of the American Foundry Society,” said Tom. “AFS plays a critical role in advancing and supporting foundries across the United States, and I look forward to contributing to the future of our industry and helping strengthen manufacturing here at home.”



We’re proud to share that McWane Ductile Sales Representative **Jaycie Bellamy** has been selected by the American Water Works Association to serve as the Young Professional Advisor to the executive committee of the board of directors for the 2026–2029 term.

This honor recognizes Jaycie’s outstanding leadership, active engagement with AWWA and dedication to advancing the water industry. The selection process was highly competitive, with candidates evaluated for their proven commitment to AWWA’s mission, ability to think strategically and passion for supporting the next generation of water professionals.

As a YP Advisor, Jaycie will join AWWA’s top leadership team — helping shape key initiatives and decisions that guide the association’s future while representing the voice of young professionals across North America.





# ARE YOUR WATER AND WASTEWATER SPECIFICATIONS KEEPING UP WITH CHANGE?

*BY JOHN SIMPSON, P.E., ENV SP, AMPP CT,  
MCWANE DUCTILE REGIONAL ENGINEER*

## Nothing stays the same, and that includes water and wastewater project specifications.

Recently, I was looking forward to breakfast at my favorite local restaurant, one I'd been visiting for years. When I pulled into the parking lot, I was greeted by a simple "Closed" sign. After 34 years in business, the restaurant had been sold, and a furniture store was moving in. It was a small reminder of an old saying: The only constant in life is change.

The water and wastewater industry is no different. Materials evolve, regulations shift and technology advances. Utility and engineering project specifications must keep pace or risk falling behind, affecting cost, safety, compliance and long-term performance.

This article explores why keeping water and wastewater project specifications current is critical for utilities and civil engineers.

### WHAT ARE UTILITY AND ENGINEERING PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS?

Utility and engineering project specifications are mandatory written documents that define a project's requirements, standards, materials, performance criteria and construction methods. They serve as a critical link between design intent and final execution, guiding designers, manufacturers, contractors and inspectors.

Specifications are the backbone of a successful project. When they are clear,



detailed and up to date, projects tend to run more efficiently. Owners benefit from more competitive bids, fewer requests for clarification during construction, improved constructability and stronger long-term system performance. Think of updated specifications as a proactive risk-management tool. They help ensure longevity, regulatory compliance and sustainable water management for the communities that utilities serve.

### THE COST OF OUTDATED SPECIFICATIONS

Outdated specifications often fail the "five C's" of good specification writing: clear, concise, complete, correct and consistent. When specs fall short, projects are more likely to experience confusion, cost overruns, delays, rework and even legal exposure.

#### Common red flags include:

- ▶ References to obsolete materials, such as polybutylene, asbestos cement or clay pipe
- ▶ Referencing outdated AWWA standards
- ▶ Joint types no longer used in the industry
- ▶ Manufacturers that no longer exist

While these issues may seem minor, they can lead to higher bid prices,

misinterpretation in the field and unnecessary construction challenges.

### WHY KEEPING SPECIFICATIONS CURRENT MATTERS

#### 1. REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

Water and wastewater projects operate under strict health, safety, and environmental regulations designed to protect public health and ensure safe, reliable service. Outdated specifications may fail to meet current legal requirements, leading to fines, project delays or legal challenges.

In April 2024, for example, the Environmental Protection Agency finalized the first enforceable national drinking water standards for six PFAS compounds, including PFOA and PFOS. Looking ahead, additional contaminants, such as microplastics, may be included in future monitoring and regulatory frameworks. Updated specifications help ensure treatment technologies and materials align with evolving maximum contaminant levels and compliance requirements.<sup>1</sup>

#### 2. TECHNOLOGY ADVANCEMENTS

The water sector continues to advance in materials, treatment processes, and monitoring systems. New technologies improve the detection of bacteria,



pathogens, pharmaceuticals and emerging contaminants while enhancing utility system resilience and operational efficiency. Current specifications allow utilities to take advantage of these innovations rather than relying on outdated approaches.

### 3. PERFORMANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Modern specifications support life-cycle cost analysis, enabling utilities to select materials that deliver the best long-term value. Designing systems with extended service lives — often 100 years or more — reduces replacement frequency, lowers environmental impact and supports sustainable infrastructure planning.<sup>2</sup>

### 4. RISK MANAGEMENT

Relying on outdated specifications increases the risk of system failure, contamination and infrastructure damage. Current specifications ensure projects are built to modern engineering standards, reducing exposure to safety, operational and reputational risks.

### 5. OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND COST CONTROL

Accurate, up-to-date specifications improve operational efficiency by enabling optimized treatment processes, reducing chemical use, accelerating leak detection, and lowering pumping and treatment energy costs. They also improve construction planning and

execution, minimizing errors, reducing rework, and streamlining operation and maintenance over the life of the system, ultimately lowering total ownership costs.<sup>3</sup>

### 6. PROCUREMENT AND BIDDING CLARITY

Current specifications provide contractors with a clear and consistent basis for bidding, promoting fair competition and more accurate pricing.

This clarity is especially important for federally funded projects. Under the Build America, Buy America Act, qualifying domestic products must be used. Specifications that fail to reflect current domestic manufacturers can result in contractors unintentionally bidding noncompliant materials, putting project funding and all parties involved at risk. This example highlights the project funding component only and does not address the quality issues/concerns that could develop when a utility uses nondomestic materials, such as Ductile iron pipe.<sup>4 & 5</sup>



## STAYING AHEAD OF CHANGE

Regularly reviewing and updating project specifications will help utilities and consulting engineers protect project integrity and ensure infrastructure is built safely, efficiently and to modern standards.

At McWane Ductile, our sales operations team can review project specifications for Ductile iron pipe to ensure they are accurate and current. Many of our team members bring decades of experience from utility operations, consulting engineering and field construction. From design and submittals to installation, we are committed to supporting water and wastewater professionals throughout the industry.

Change is inevitable. Making sure your specifications evolve with it is a choice and one that will pay dividends for decades to come.

### Recommended Reading

For additional insight, I recommend the following #IronStrong blog articles by my colleagues, available at [McWaneDuctile.com/blog](https://McWaneDuctile.com/blog):

1. Safe Drinking Water – How Do We Ensure the Highest Standards? By Jerry Regula
2. Why Should I Use Ductile Iron Pipe? Four Key Considerations by Roy Mundy
3. How Can Using Ductile Iron Pipe Save Money on a Water Utility's Energy Bill? By Cole Mitcham
4. Build America, Buy America Act (BABA): What Is It, What Has Changed & Where Do We Go From Here? By Ashley Wright and Dustin Henderson
5. Why Consider a Domestic Only Ductile Iron Pipe Specification? By Roy Mundy



**DEAR DITCH DOCTOR,**

I've got the governing project engineer telling me I need to use a significantly thicker Ductile iron pipe wall than what I proposed due to his concerns about cold weather weakening the pipe and corrosion or rusting from outdoor storage, which could be for a year or more on this large project. It does get very cold, rainy and snowy out here in winter, and summer temperatures can be brutal as well. I don't want to ruffle feathers here, but what he is asking for seems a bit much and would greatly change many factors on this project. What is my best approach?

Sincerely,  
Wondering in Wyoming

**DEAR WONDERING,**

It sounds like he has considerable experience with PVC and not much with Ductile iron and is conflating the reactions in various service environments between the two. PVC requires attention to service temperature and storage conditions to maintain its listed pressure ratings and material strengths. In their own literature, these nominal properties exist only at 73.4°F, with significant reductions occurring with just a 10°F difference in either direction. Note that most buried waterlines operate year-round at or about 51°F, so you can understand his “the-thicker-the-better” approach.

a shade of gray over time, but it is primarily cosmetic to begin with, so no worries there either. Sun, rain and snow have no adverse effect on DI pipe and fittings.

His concern about wall thickness most likely stems from the common misperception that buried metal will rust or corrode, so the thicker it starts, the longer it lasts. And while cold weather, rain and snow can affect some metals over time, they do nothing to harm DI to any measurable or concerning degree. DI is so strong and resilient that internal pressure is rarely, if ever, the overriding concern, unlike PVC and other alternative materials.

The wall thickness of a DI pipe is typically related to resisting external loads, in other words, the weight of earth and the live load of traffic above it. This has nothing to do with temperature.

So, if you've selected your pipe wall in accordance with the design standard AWWA C150, which makes no mention of temperatures, there is no need to go with a thicker wall, unless local specifications call for a given wall class of pipe, which can happen. That does not sound like the case here. I would suggest asking the engineer for the stats or qualifications of his “thicken it up” request; otherwise, you would both be needlessly spending more money than you should.

The proven benefit of a Ductile iron pipe wall performing the same regardless of thickness or temperature encountered inside or out in 99.9% of all applications is just part of the start of the beauty of Ductile iron!

Sincerely,  
The Ditch Doctor



*Ductile iron pipe being installed without concerns in subfreezing snowy conditions*

Conversely, Ductile iron pipes' safe working range without concern is from -40°F to 212°F, without any adverse effect on the pipes' rating or wall strength. No questions or qualifiers asked or needed. DI can be used for higher temps, such as experienced in steam lines, up to 300°F, without cement lining and with different gaskets.

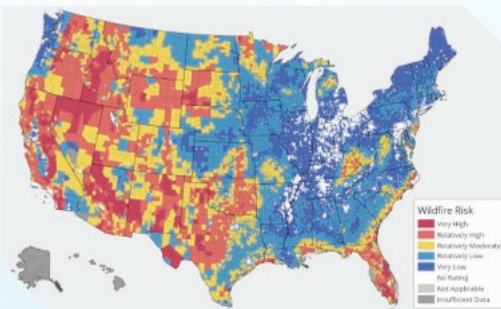
Outdoor storage has zero adverse effect on DI pipe, even over long periods of time — I'm talking decades here. Sure, the water-based asphaltic paint inside and out (sealcoat) will blanch out to

BY JACOB LOVIN, ENV SP,  
MCWANE DUCTILE  
REGIONAL ENGINEER

## HOW THE WATER INDUSTRY IS REVOLUTIONIZING

As the world continues to evolve, so do the tools, practices and technologies shaping the water industry. While artificial intelligence platforms like ChatGPT currently dominate headlines, other emerging technologies — particularly augmented reality and virtual reality — are poised to fundamentally change how water infrastructure is planned, built, operated and maintained.

Imagine designing a pipeline intended for future expansion in a seismically active city with fire and flooding risks. Using AR-enabled lenses, engineers could visualize GIS data and seamlessly integrate with platforms such as Revit,



Bluebeam and AutoCAD. Population growth projections, infrastructure changes and real-time simulations could be adjusted instantly, allowing teams to evaluate pipeline configurations, resiliency and performance before construction even begins. This is where the industry is headed — toward a safer, more collaborative and best-practice-driven future.

# THE FUTURE IS NOW

## AUGMENTED REALITY VS. VIRTUAL REALITY

Although often discussed together, AR and VR serve different purposes. Augmented reality enhances the real world by overlaying digital content — such as images, data or 3D models — onto a user's physical surroundings in real time. AR integrates seamlessly with smart devices and emphasizes interaction with the existing environment.

Virtual reality, by contrast, immerses users in a fully simulated, computer-generated environment that replaces awareness of the physical world. VR typically requires specialized headsets and accessories and engages multiple senses to create a strong sense of presence. Both technologies offer distinct advantages, and together they provide powerful tools for training, safety, collaboration and design within the water industry.

## TRANSFORMING EVERYDAY PRACTICES

### TRAINING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

AR and VR enable scenario-based training that places employees in simulated emergency or high-risk



situations, allowing them to practice decision-making and response strategies in a safe, controlled environment. This immersive approach reinforces learning far more effectively than traditional classroom methods.

Data visualization through AR goggles allows trainees to view real-time information rather than relying solely on textbooks, presentations or spreadsheets. As the industry has already shifted from chalkboards to virtual classrooms, integrating immersive technology is a natural next step.

Remote assistance further enhances training and troubleshooting. Field crews







can connect with industry experts in real time, accessing instructional videos and step-by-step guidance during installation or repair processes — without requiring an expert to be physically present.

## INTERACTIVE LEARNING AND PRODUCT INSIGHT

Immersive tutorials allow users to explore manufacturing processes, installation techniques, maintenance procedures and safety protocols for Ductile iron pipe. When questions arise in the field, workers can instantly access instructional content covering topics such as cutting pipe, repairs or protective systems.

AR and VR also offer virtual plant tours and product demonstrations. Customers can experience foundries, manufacturing practices and product assemblies from their office or home, gaining deeper insight into McWane Ductile and the broader McWane family of companies.

## ADVANCING SAFETY IN THE FIELD

Safety is one of the most compelling applications of immersive technology. AR can help identify potential hazards — such as leaks, cracks or corrosion risks — by providing instant visual cues directly in a worker's field of view.

Enhanced situational awareness enables users to view real-time data, including pressure, temperature and flow rates, supporting informed decision-making and faster response times. Remote collaboration enables experienced technicians to guide less experienced workers through complex or hazardous tasks using live video overlays, helping ensure proper installation and safety practices.

In addition, AR devices can capture photos and video documentation of inspections, repairs and work activities. This documentation supports compliance, accountability, and adherence to safety regulations and industry standards.

## REAL-WORLD ADOPTION

These technologies are no longer theoretical. Industries worldwide — including water utilities — are already adopting immersive tools. Australia's Melbourne Water utility, for example, uses VR as an alternative to traditional hazard identification during plant design. By allowing users to walk through virtual models of treatment facilities, the utility has improved safety outcomes while reducing reliance on lengthy reviews of drawings and CAD files.

As younger generations enter the workforce — already fluent in digital tools, gaming environments

and immersive experiences — they will continue to accelerate this transformation and modernize long-standing industry practices.

## COLLABORATION WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

In an era defined by remote work and virtual meetings, AR and VR open new possibilities for collaboration. Conferences, training sessions and high-level meetings can be attended virtually, eliminating the need for travel while preserving the experience of being present and engaged with peers from around the world.



## LOOKING AHEAD

This glimpse into the future of water underscores the importance of embracing innovation today. By leveraging AR and VR technologies, the water industry can enhance safety, improve training, strengthen collaboration and deliver more resilient infrastructure for communities worldwide.

To read the expanded version of this article in blog format, visit [McWaneDuctile.com/blog](https://McWaneDuctile.com/blog).

# Engineered for Excellence



**McWANE  
DUCTILE**

Just as Leonardo da Vinci's "Vitruvian Man" embodies perfect balance, proportion and enduring design, Ductile iron pipe reflects these same principles in modern infrastructure.

Engineered to withstand the toughest conditions, our pipe delivers unmatched strength and durability. Where others fail, DI pipe endures, providing communities with reliable water infrastructure that lasts.

Resilient. Sustainable. Timeless. McWane Ductile iron pipe stands strong, decade after decade.

**McWane Ductile: Building Iron Strong Utilities for Generations.**

[McWaneDuctile.com](http://McWaneDuctile.com)



**POCKET ENGINEER**

Available for iOS + Android  
or online at [pe.mcwane.com](http://pe.mcwane.com)





# PROJECT PROFILES

## West

### PROJECT PROFILE

The need to replace aging infrastructure was the main reason this project came to fruition in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The largest force main in the city needed to be replaced, and Ductile iron was chosen as the material for generations of #IronStrong infrastructure to support current demand and future growth. McWane Ductile has been alongside the distributor, contractor and engineer from project inception to shipment completion. Making sure the contractor has all the tools and information needed throughout the project installation is

something we take pride in and offer for every project we supply. A detailed "Ductile 101" job-site training with the on-site crews made for a smooth install.

McWane Ductile made sure to cover all aspects of the specific project, including pipe-handling dos and don'ts, joint-installation best practices (TJ and TR Flex®), P401 field repair, proper pipe lube application, polywrap installation, gasket installation, and much more. Huge thank you to the Spear D crew for being engaged during the training! Spear D is a local New Mexico contractor with over 35 years of experience. What started as a small family-run plumbing operation has grown into one of the largest and most sought-after contractors in the state.



**Sales Region:** West

**Sales Representative:** Ben Johnson

**Project Location:** Albuquerque, NM

**Project Name:** Lift Station #20 Force Main Replacement/Rehabilitation Ph1

**Project Owner/Utility:** Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority

**Project Engineer:** Carollo

**Project Contractor:** Spear D Construction

**Project Distributor:** Core & Main

#### Types of Ductile iron pipe used on the project:

DIAMETER	JOINT	CLASS	FOOTAGE
30"	TR Flex®	CL50	2,646
30"	Tyton®	CL50	7,002

**Sales Region:** Midwest  
**Sales Representative:** Cole Mitcham  
**Project Location:** Bardstown, KY  
**Project Name:** North Nelson County Water District Water Supply Project — Ph. 2  
**Project Owner/Utility:** North Nelson County Water District, Bardstown, KY  
**Project Engineer:** Kentucky Engineering Group, PLLC  
**Project Contractor:** Dirt Works Unlimited  
**Project Distributor:** Consolidated Pipe & Supply Co., Jeffersonville, IN

**Types of Ductile iron pipe used on the project:**

DIAMETER	JOINT	CLASS	FOOTAGE
24"	Tyton® & TR Flex®	250	31,500



The North Nelson Water District identified the need to strengthen its water supply system to better serve end users, particularly to support the

continued growth of the bourbon industry in Bardstown and throughout Nelson County. To address this need, the North Nelson Water District, the city of Bardstown and the Louisville Water Company collaborated throughout 2024 and into 2025 to plan and advance the partnership.

In February 2025, Phase 2 of the North Nelson County Water District Water Supply Project received approval from the Kentucky Public Service Commission. During the planning and design phases, representatives from McWane Ductile worked closely with Kentucky Engineering Group, PLLC to determine the optimal pipe size and pressure class for the project. This collaboration resulted in the selection of approximately 31,500

feet of Class 250 Ductile iron pipe using Tyton® and TR Flex® joints.

Bardstown Mayor Dick Heaton emphasized the project’s long-term importance, stating, “Bardstown is home to many distilleries, manufacturers, farms, and more. Because of the partnership between the North Nelson Water District, the City of Bardstown, and the Louisville Water Company, members of our business community will have the water they need for the foreseeable future. Water grows Bardstown!”

Nelson County Judge Executive Tim Hutchins added, “This project is a game-changer for Nelson County.”

PROJECT PROFILE

# Midwest





# Northeast

PROJECT PROFILE



Located only feet from our front door at the McWane Ductile New Jersey plant in Phillipsburg, this is the shortest delivery ever made from this facility (see pictures). This water main project consists of replacing the existing cast-iron waterlines, estimated to be approximately 75 years old, with new 12-inch and 8-inch Ductile iron pipe.

The contractor, CRJ Contracting, had to navigate through multiple narrow streets of downtown Phillipsburg, including Sitgreaves Street, to install the new line and over 450 new service connections. Aqua New Jersey, the owner of the new waterlines, informed McWane Ductile that the installation contractor, CRJ, had discovered several underground tunnels. Local historians have been notified to help ascertain the purpose of these tunnels.



**Sales Region:** Northeast  
**Sales Representative:** Gary Kurtz  
**Project Location:** Phillipsburg, NJ  
**Project Name:** Sitgreaves Street  
**Project Owner/Utility:** Aqua New Jersey  
**Project Engineer:** Suburban Consulting Engineers  
**Project Contractor:** CRJ Contracting Corp.

**Types of Ductile iron pipe used on the project:**

DIAMETER	JOINT	CLASS	FOOTAGE
3"	Tyton®	52	—
3"	Tyton®	52	—
8"	Tyton®	52	4,350
12"	Tyton®	52	4,475

**Sales Region:** South  
**Sales Representative:** Scott Rhorick  
**Project Location:** Harris County, TX  
**Project Name:** Central Harris County Regional Water Authority  
 2025 Package 1  
**Project Owner/Utility:** Central Harris County Regional Water  
 Authority – Houston, TX  
**Project Engineer:** IDS Engineering Group – Houston, TX  
**Project Contractor:** V&S Construction – Houston, TX  
**Project Distributor:** Core & Main - Homestead Branch, Houston, TX

**Types of Ductile iron pipe used on the project:**

DIAMETER	JOINT	CLASS	FOOTAGE
20"	TR Flex®	250	2,174



The CHCWA 2025 Project 1 was bid on Feb. 7, 2025, and V&S Construction was awarded the contract. The project involves connecting to an existing 24-inch waterline stub in the CenterPoint Corridor, approximately 275 feet east of the Veterans Memorial and Beltway 8 intersections. It also includes the construction of 12-inch, 20-inch and 30-inch diameter waterlines to convey surface water to Fallbrook UD, along with the installation of a city of Houston meter station and a meter station at the Fallbrook UD-water receiving facility.

Our primary focus for this project is the installation of 2,174 linear feet of 20-inch TR Flex® Ductile iron pipe used in micro-tunneling construction under Sam Houston Parkway and its feeder road. The starter pit was 25 feet wide and 50 feet deep. Micro-tunneling is

preferred because it minimizes surface disruption compared to traditional open-cut installation. Micro-tunneling is a trenchless technique where pipe or casing is jacked behind a micro-tunnel boring machine, eliminating the need for routine man entry. The MTBM is a mechanized excavating system equipped with a pressurized head, remote control and steerability. It uses a laser and gyroscope navigation system, features an articulated design with controlled face support, and maintains excavation stability through fluid or earth pressure balance. The machine is connected to and advanced by the installed pipe or casing.

V&S Construction has over 40 years' of experience in construction, and the project lead was Executive Vice President Rene Vega. The Central Harris County Regional Water Authority was the owner of the project, formed in 2003 through a contract among conservation and reclamation districts. It currently consists of eleven districts operating twelve groundwater wells with a total production of 1,780 million gallons per year. In 2005, House Bill 3181 established CHCWA as a



separate political subdivision of the state of Texas. IDS Engineering Group, founded in 1970, is 100% employee-owned and operates under the mission: "To provide our clients excellent engineering solutions within an environment that allows our professionals to practice in a highly satisfying and challenging way."

PROJECT PROFILE  
**South**





**EAST SALES TEAM**

**GENERAL SALES**

**Craig Spitzer**, General Sales Manager  
Office: 908-878-0822  
craig.spitzer@mcwaneductile.com

**Kelly Bray**, Inside Sales Manager  
Office: 908-878-0837  
kelly.bray@mcwaneductile.com

**NEW JERSEY, DELAWARE & NEW YORK CITY**

**Gary Kurtz**, Senior Sales Representative  
Cell: 518-235-6001  
gary.kurtz@mcwaneductile.com

**NEW ENGLAND**

**Jeff Houser**, Senior Sales Representative  
Cell: 518-275-1780  
jeff.houser@mcwaneductile.com

**NEW YORK**

**Mike Palermo**, Senior Sales Representative  
Cell: 717-571-5686  
mike.palermo@mcwaneductile.com

**PENNSYLVANIA**

**Bob Hartzel**, Senior Sales Representative  
Cell: 717-571-5683  
bob.hartzel@mcwaneductile.com

**MARYLAND**

**Julianne Petraitis**, Sales Representative  
Cell: 908-878-3702  
julianne.petraitis@mcwaneductile.com

**VIRGINIA**

**Todd Soady**, Senior Sales Representative  
Cell: 757-262-6174  
todd.soady@mcwaneductile.com

**NORTH CAROLINA**

**Eden Roth**, Sales Representative  
Cell: 919-600-8251  
eden.roth@mcwaneductile.com

**MIDWEST SALES TEAM**

**GENERAL SALES**

**Scott Frank**, General Sales Manager  
Office: 740-291-1066  
Cell: 740-202-3094  
scott.frank@mcwaneductile.com

**Dave Bursh**, Inside Sales Manager  
Office: 740-291-1064  
dave.bursh@mcwaneductile.com

**ILLINOIS & EASTERN IOWA**

**Dan Flaig**, Senior Sales Representative  
Cell: 815-353-4607  
dan.flaig@mcwaneductile.com

**KENTUCKY, SOUTHERN & CENTRAL INDIANA**

**Cole Mitcham, P.E.**, Sales Representative  
Cell: 330-440-2677  
cole.mitcham@mcwaneductile.com

**MICHIGAN, NORTHERN INDIANA & NORTHWESTERN OHIO**

**Kate Alexakos**, Sales Representative  
Cell: 419-202-1821  
kate.alexakos@mcwaneductile.com

**NEBRASKA, KANSAS, MISSOURI, WESTERN IOWA, SOUTHERN ILLINOIS & SOUTH DAKOTA**

**Jordan Forsythe**, Sales Representative  
Cell: 740-810-3395  
jordan.forsythe@mcwaneductile.com

**CENTRAL, NORTHEASTERN & SOUTHWESTERN OHIO & WEST VIRGINIA**

**Clinton (CJ) Fowler**, Sales Representative  
Cell: 330-260-9292  
clinton.fowler@mcwaneductile.com

**WISCONSIN, MINNESOTA & NORTH DAKOTA**

**Shawn Smith**, Sales Representative  
Cell: 608-440-0667  
shawn.smith@mcwaneductile.com

**SOUTH SALES TEAM**

**GENERAL SALES**

**Dusty Henderson**, General Sales Manager  
Cell: 615-418-0741  
dustin.henderson@mcwaneductile.com

**TENNESSEE**

**AJ DeMatteo**, Sales Representative  
Cell: 423-667-9799  
aj.dematteo@mcwaneductile.com

**ARKANSAS, OKLAHOMA & NORTH TEXAS**

**Jaycie Bellamy**, Sales Representative  
Cell: 615-663-5069  
jaycie.bellamy@mcwaneductile.com

**FLORIDA (Except Panhandle)**

**Isabella DiCristofaro**, Sales Representative  
Cell: 754-259-4954  
isabella.dicristofaro@mcwaneductile.com

**ALABAMA, LOUISIANA, MISSISSIPPI, FLORIDA (Panhandle Only) & TENNESSEE (Memphis Only)**

**Tyler Phillips**, Sales Representative  
Cell: 256-612-9151  
tyler.phillips@mcwaneductile.com

**TEXAS (Except El Paso & North Texas)**

**Scott Rhorick**, Senior Sales Representative  
Cell: 254-317-8455  
scott.rhorick@mcwaneductile.com

**GEORGIA & SOUTH CAROLINA**

**Hayden Beyer**, Sales Representative  
Cell: 404-922-7185  
hayden.beyer@mcwaneductile.com

**WEST SALES TEAM**

**GENERAL SALES**

**Nick Koncar**, General Sales Manager  
Cell: 801-864-5544  
nick.koncar@mcwaneductile.com

**Matt Paulson**, Inside Sales Manager  
Office: 801-623-4253  
matt.paulson@mcwaneductile.com

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

**Carolyn Lopez**, Senior Sales Representative  
Cell: 951-310-6444  
carolyn.lopez@mcwaneductile.com

**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA & NEVADA**

**Bill Kleczka**, Sales Representative  
Cell: 559-401-9006  
bill.kleczka@mcwaneductile.com

**ARIZONA, NEW MEXICO & EL PASO, TEXAS**

**Ben Johnson**, Sales Representative  
Cell: 801-616-1154  
ben.johnson@mcwaneductile.com

**UTAH, COLORADO & LAS VEGAS**

**Morgan Rial**, Sales Representative  
Cell: 801-719-1043  
morgan.rial@mcwaneductile.com

**WEST WASHINGTON, ALASKA & HAWAII**

**Jason Harrison**, Senior Sales Representative  
Cell: 425-681-1394  
jason.harrison@mcwaneductile.com

**OREGON**

**Wyatt Schrock**, Sales Representative  
Cell: 971-803-1083  
wyatt.schrock@mcwaneductile.com

**EAST WASHINGTON, IDAHO, WYOMING & MONTANA**

**Austin Flynn**, Sales Representative  
Cell: 509-614-8846  
austin.flynn@mcwaneductile.com

**SALES OPERATIONS**

**Stuart Liddell**, Sales Operations Manager  
Cell: 352-208-5709  
stuart.liddell@mcwaneductile.com

**Jeff Henderson**, National Account Manager  
Cell: 614-404-4909  
jeff.henderson@mcwaneductile.com

**Jerry Regula**, Senior National Product Engineer  
Cell: 740-294-7899  
jerry.regula@mcwaneductile.com

**Ken Rickvasky**, National Product Engineer  
Cell: 609-290-7701  
ken.rickvasky@mcwaneductile.com

**Kyle Wheeler**, Product Engineer  
Cell: 740-502-7379  
kyle.wheeler@mcwaneductile.com

**Roy Mundy, P.E.**, Senior Regional Engineer  
Cell: 859-361-8585  
roy.mundy@mcwaneductile.com

**John Simpson, P.E.**, Regional Engineer  
Cell: 865-256-2541  
john.simpson@mcwaneductile.com

**Jacob Lovin**, Regional Engineer  
Cell: 740-610-3364  
jacob.lovin@mcwaneductile.com

**Dan McFarland**, Technical Services Specialist  
Cell: 740-552-1218  
dan.mcfarland@mcwaneductile.com

**Andrea Kubik**, Marketing Manager  
Office: 740-202-7352  
andrea.kubik@mcwaneductile.com

**CANADA SALES TEAM**

**ALBERTA, MANITOBA & SASKATCHEWAN**

**Mike Williams**, Western Canada Sales Manager  
Cell: 403-617-4425  
mike.williams@mcwanecanada.com

**ATLANTIC**

**Mike Duguay**, Atlantic Sales Manager  
Cell: 506-449-1753  
mike.duguay@mcwanecanada.com

**BRITISH COLUMBIA**

**Mike Williams**, Western Canada Sales Manager  
Cell: 403-617-4425  
mike.williams@mcwanecanada.com

**ONTARIO**

**Adrian Sloan**, Ontario Sales Manager  
Cell: 416-891-4536  
adrian.sloan@mcwanecanada.com

**QUEBEC**

**Alain Charron**, Quebec Sales Manager  
Cell: 418-655-3832  
alain.charron@mcwanecanada.com



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