

FOR RESIDENTIAL, MUNICIPAL AND INDUSTRIAL CLEANING CONTRACTORS

Cleaner



SHOW ISSUE



Green Up

B. Frank Joy Co. finds multiple ways to be earth-friendly Page 28

TECH PERSPECTIVE

Training CCTV operators

MONEY MANAGER

Dealing with a debt burden

SAFETY FIRST

The dangers of trenching

008510
P054
CLE1

AUTO**5-DIGIT*****



PRSTI
U.S. PO
PA
CO
PUBLIS

Members of the B. Frank Joy team: from left, field laborer Mike Lawson; general manager Desi Hannon; field laborer James Catlett, George Graham, Larry Killens and Charles Thomas; crew leader Deno David; and field laborer Richard Smith. (Photography by Arthur Bunda)



Green Up

B. Frank Joy Co. scours its operations for ways to use less fuel, save electricity, recycle materials, and in general be more earth-friendly

By Ken Wysocky

With apologies to Kermit the Frog, it's not easy turning a company green. But at the B. Frank Joy Co. in Hyattsville, Md., employees are becoming as knowledgeable about carbon footprints and alternative fuels as they are about the sewer and infrastructure services the company provides throughout the Mid-Atlantic Coast region.

"One of our five-year goals is establishing green initiatives," says Desi Hannon, general manager of the company, whose core services include pipe cleaning, inspection, and trenchless rehabilitation. "The main reason we're doing it is that it's the right thing to do, for the company and for future generations. It's just common sense. And on top of that, we also can realize some cost savings." Earth-friendly objectives include:

Making its office complex compliant with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards, developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC).

Reducing its carbon footprint (total greenhouse-gas emissions) by 5 percent.

Expanding its services to meet new environmental market opportunities that match the company's core capabilities, such as installing infrastructure for geothermal heating and solar and wind power.

"We're also emphasizing no-dig solutions – trenchless technologies because they don't use as much equipment as when you dig up and replace lines," Hannon says. "That reduces your carbon footprint."

While he doesn't believe being green gives Joy a huge competitive edge, Hannon thinks it eventually will provide a marketing advantage. If not, else, more and more projects already require contractors to use eco-friendly practices. "The market is heading that way," Hannon says. "We've already l

PROFILE

B. FRANK JOY CO., HYATTSVILLE, MD.

OWNER: Kenny Joy and family

FOUNDED: 1917

EMPLOYEES: 170

SERVICE AREA: Mid-Atlantic states

SPECIALTIES: Underground infrastructure installation and maintenance; sewer cleaning, inspection and rehabilitation



a government job that required Tier III-compliant diesel equipment. If we didn't have newer equipment that met those emission standards, we wouldn't be on that job.

"In addition, workers on that project were required to earn certification by attending one-hour workshops about environmental awareness. All the guys needed a card to show they attended."

Starting from scratch

To become green machines, companies must first benchmark where they are. For Joy officials, that meant attending USGBC seminars and a major Mid-Atlantic USGBC conference last fall. The company also formed a leadership green team to research what is required to become more earth-friendly.

"We've learned so much in the last year," Hannon says. "You've got to benchmark. You've got to know where you are before you can move forward." He suggests first looking for the "low-hanging fruit." At Joy, that meant determining basic things, such as how many kilowatt-hours of electricity, therms of natural gas and gallons of fuel it uses.

The researchers found to their surprise that the office building used more electricity during the night when it was less occupied – because of intense security lighting. As a result, the company is looking into different lights that use less energy and reduce light pollution, as well. Motion-sensitive lights also are under consideration. Moreover, the company now requires employees to turn off computers, lights and other electric devices when they leave the office.

"We're emphasizing no-dig solutions – trenchless technologies – because they don't use as much equipment as when you dig up and replace lines. That reduces your carbon footprint."

Desi Hannon

While power and gas usage has dropped, it's too early in the game to provide specific numbers. But Hannon notes that substantive results don't require extraordinary effort. "Many times, it's just simple things that achieve the biggest impact," he says. "Collectively, if everyone does a little bit, it adds up to a huge number."



Kenny Belsar, mechanic, repairs an air compressor.



Santos Romero, equipment operator, works with the steam hose reel used in the company's sewer lateral rehabilitation system from LMK Enterprises.

Fuel alternatives

Another surprise the team found was that biodiesel fuel, made from renewable resources such as vegetable oils and recycled restaurant greases, isn't as green as they thought. "There's no pipeline or distribution infrastructure, so it must be trucked here, which increases its carbon footprint," Hannon says. "So we're switching our focus on fuels to natural gas and propane, which are more readily available."

To further reduce emissions, Joy plans to buy alternative-powered equipment as it rotates out its fleet and has imposed a no-idling rule for all equipment

TRAINING BOOSTS LOYALTY

Whether for green procedures or on-the-job safety, employee training is a priority at the B. Frank Joy Co., and a key tool in minimizing turnover.

"We have a lot of long-time employees," says general manager Desi Hannon. "Our core employees average close to 20 years of service, and we have one who's been here for 43 years. By providing training, you make employees feel like you're looking to help them advance and better themselves. Training is a cornerstone of our company."

Joy offers a two-year apprenticeship for laborers on its sewer rehabilitation crews. After completing the program, which involves 144 hours of classroom time and hundreds of hours of on-the-job training, employees get promoted to a skilled-labor classification.

Safety also is a primary concern. Each company division holds 60- to 90-minute monthly safety meetings in which team leaders review any incidents that have occurred since the last meeting, and lead discussions about what can be done to prevent them.

The company also strives to hold daily safety talks on jobsites, led by an employee who takes the role of safety monitor. "We're trying to push it down and get all employees involved and aware – get in a safety mindset each day," Hannon says.

"We replace our equipment about every seven years, and with our new focus, we're looking at environmentally friendly equipment," Hannon notes. "We don't want to wait until government mandates kick in."

Joy plans to eventually replace its 60 pickup, utility body and dump trucks with alternative-fuel vehicles, or with hybrids. For starters, the company is looking to buy six to eight natural gas or propane vehicles in 2010.

Hannon recently test drove a hybrid dump truck and came away impressed. "Propane or natural gas makes more sense for Joy's fleet because the company could feasibly build its own fueling station. Using those fuels to run equipment is more problematic because of the lack of refueling infrastructure.

backfill, and Joy doesn't have to pay landfill tipping fees to dispose of demolition material. "We still pay a tipping fee to the recycler, but it's not as expensive," Hannon says.

Office recycling has been very successful. Joy used to pay anywhere from \$12,000 to \$14,000 a year for trash

"We even use recycled material for backfilling. If we're removing asphalt and concrete, we haul it to a recycling facility that grinds it up and sells it back to us as backfill material. We'd do it ourselves, but it's not a business we want to get into."

Desi Hannon

"They're much harder to manage outside our yard," he says.

In the long term, Hannon says Joy may have to hire a consultant to get its building LEED certified. To achieve certification, a company earns points by proving that its building meets stringent standards covering everything from chemical use and light pollution to water-energy conservation and alternative commuting options for employees.

"It's turned into a very time-consuming project," Hannon says.

removal but now it spends \$4,000 to \$6,000. That's because cardboard, metal, bottles, cans and other recyclables have been removed from the waste stream.



Desi Hannon, general manager of B. Frank Joy Company.



Santos Romero with the truck that carries the company's pipe lining equipment.

Emphasis on recycling

One of Joy's "stretch goals" is to become a landfill-free company that recycles all its waste. That covers both office-generated items and demolition material from jobsites, such as wood, concrete and asphalt.

"We look at everything to see if it can be recycled," Hannon says. "That includes everything from steel and metal that we dig up to antifreeze and oil from vehicles and paper and printer ink cartridges in the office.

"We even use recycled material for backfilling. If we're removing asphalt and concrete, we haul it to a recycling facility that grinds it up and sells it back to us as backfill material. We'd do it ourselves, but it's not a business we want to get into. It's too expensive to buy grinders for all our jobsites."

Buying back the crushed material is still cheaper than buying new

Getting the word out

To promote green-consciousness among employees, Joy relies on companywide e-mails, posted flyers and discussions at employee meetings. The green team meets quarterly to discuss issues and what should be communicated to employees. "Our employees have been very receptive," Hannon notes. "It didn't take a lot of follow-up to get people on board."

Joy also strives to keep employees and customers up to date on emerging products that are earth-friendly and more effective than traditional methods. Sometimes, that's easier said than done. "Customers are looking for constant improvement, but they also want a suitable return on investment," Hannon says. "In a bidding environment, that's a challenge, because the lowest bid isn't always the best bid from an ROI perspective.

"Newer technology might be more expensive, but may provide a better overall solution. Initially, for instance, you might be looking at an infiltration and inflow problem, but you also should think about reducing root intrusions and backups and improving flow, as well as reducing maintenance and inspections. It's sort of like using synthetic engine oils that allow longer intervals between oil changes for cars."

Regardless of those challenges, Hannon believes the green movement is here to stay, and that will make it easier in the long run to educate customers. "I think this time, the environmental movement is going to stick, and in a more common-sense way than in the past," he says.

He points to the shift in philosophy about how to handle stormwater runoff. "The old philosophy was get the water as fast as possible to a drainage ditch, which flows into a creek and then into a river. Now the emphasis is on slowing down the process and letting the ground do as much as possible. It's a total change in mindset."

In addition, more companies are turning to vegetation roofs to contain and treat stormwater runoff. They're also reducing internal water use with waterless urinals, low-flow plumbing fixtures, and dual-flush toilets, he notes. Going green may not be easy, but as Hannon says, it makes a lot of sense. ■

MORE INFO:

LMK Enterprises Inc.
815/433-1275
www.lmkenterprises.com