

# Inside THE Diamond

**Amerex**

SPRING 2020



Quality is Behind the Diamond

## *A Letter from Harrison Bishop*



**HARRISON BISHOP**  
PRESIDENT

It is hard to believe that we are well into the year 2020. Not long ago, 2020 seemed like the distant future. However, since the company's founding in 1971, the leadership at Amerex has made decisions for the long-term, and investments into the company for the future. As a result, Amerex quickly became and remains a leader in the fire suppression industry. In this edition of "Inside the Diamond," it is apparent that we are continuing the tradition of investing in our company and making decisions for the long-term benefit of those involved with the fire suppression industry. Detailed inside is information concerning our efforts surrounding complete fire protection in the National Defense Authorization Act, the continuous strides we make for the protection of the environment and the expansion of our distribution centers to better serve all our customers.

This year, we also transitioned to a new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, which required more than a year of training and preparation. As anyone who has been through an ERP conversion can tell you, because the system involves everything that enters the plant, how it is transformed into product, sold and how it is shipped, an ERP

changeover is no easy task! However, our team has persevered and made great progress in working the new system into our daily business. We appreciate the patience of our team members, customers and suppliers as we work to iron out all the new processes.

This publication also highlights the newest Amerex products, and the progress that our Kitchen and Industrial Systems group has made into new arenas, along with a spotlight on one of our international vehicle system sales partners. Each of these areas of progress required foresight, study and decisions made well in advance. We continue to fill our pipeline with ideas, product innovations and system improvements for the future of Amerex. Finally, in this newsletter you will be introduced to a group of team members who carry on a long-standing tradition at Amerex. Our Customer Service team has adapted to the changing business environment and technologies over the years, but they have not forgotten their top priority: our customers. Thank you for taking the time to read "Inside the Diamond," and thank you for being an Amerex partner.

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# FEMA AND AMEREX WORK TOGETHER TO KEEP DEFENSE PERSONNEL SAFE

The mission of the Fire Equipment Manufacturers' Association is to advocate for complete life safety solutions. FEMA and Amerex have worked diligently over the last two years to affect a positive change in the fire protection mindset within the U.S. Department of Defense. With the signing of the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), this positive change was finally realized.

The NDAA is one of a few bipartisan bills passed annually through Congress. The law's bipartisan appeal and the defense focus of this bill are the main reasons FEMA and Amerex sought to change the Department of Defense fire code through this bill. Working with Rasky Partners, FEMA successfully found sponsorship of our cause in this important piece of legislation after many visits to Washington, D.C., by FEMA GRC members.

Support within the ranks of lawmakers is vital for any change to laws, but substantive changes like this one can happen only with grassroots efforts. Thanks to our strong base of distributors throughout the country, your grassroots efforts really paid off. Distributors' letter-writing campaign is a major part of this success story.

FEMA and the FEMA GRC continue our efforts to implement the positive change we've realized through the lawmaking process. Here are some additional key points to keep in mind as you're discussing these topics with your customers and equipment owners:

- Amerex believes that organizations like FEMA are key to the mutual success of the industry.
- Knowing a supplier's commitment to such pro-industry and pro-life-safety activity should be part of any business decision.
- Amerex continues to support FEMA on this issue and issues on the horizon such as fire protection on school buses through the School Bus Safety Act (House Bill HR 3959) and the Campus Fire Safety Education Act (which will provide grants to educational facilities with regards to fire safety products).
- We thank you for your support of FEMA's efforts and loyalty to Amerex.





Quality is Behind the Diamond

# BEYOND THE QUALITY

## A LOOK AT AMEREX DISTRIBUTION OPERATIONS

When a company becomes known for the high quality of its products, every other aspect of the business must rise to the same standard. In the fire suppression industry, Amerex is known for setting the standard in quality. To deliver quality throughout our customers' experience, we're committed to continuous improvement in innovation, value and customer service. When demand is high, keeping lead times short can be challenging, so Amerex invested heavily in our distribution centers with an eye on improving lead times for good. Take a look at how innovations and new efficiencies in Amerex's product distribution process are helping our customer service meet the high expectation set by our top-notch products.

It has been a busy couple of years for Logistics Manager Heath Posey. Along with managing regular distribution operations, Heath has been instrumental in expansive efforts to improve efficiency and shorten lead times. "It's always gratifying to be part of an established company that's still taking an innovative approach. The company has been really invested in giving us everything we need to make these improvements. We're looking at distribution centers that have been in place for about 40 years in some cases, and for each one, we've laid out and are implementing a plan to better serve the customer," noted Heath.

That plan to better serve the customer begins at our headquarters in Trussville, Alabama, where all our

products are made. Our headquarters also functions as a distribution center. In addition to distribution operations in Trussville, Amerex currently has distribution centers in Oakland, New Jersey, Santa Fe Springs, California (greater Los Angeles), and Elk Grove, Illinois (greater Chicago). These are longstanding distribution centers, each with more than 30 years of operational experience.

At the end of 2018, our Chicagoland distribution center moved to a new location and doubled in size, and in mid-2019, our California location also moved into a much larger facility. In each case, the new buildings were within two miles of the old locations to keep the distribution footprint the same. While



these new distribution centers were near the old ones, in some aspects, they're a world away. Each new distribution location added a host of new benefits to deliver efficiencies and enhanced order fulfillment.

# “IT’S ALWAYS GRATIFYING TO BE PART OF AN ESTABLISHED COMPANY THAT’S STILL TAKING AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH.”



In both new distribution centers, Heath’s team created efficiencies through solutions like high-density storage and gravity flow racking. These techniques compound the gains made from larger facilities with the ability to stock more inventory in the same amount of space. The new locations also improve convenience for distributors who pick up products directly with additional drive-in doors. “We’re looking to help improve the flow of product and our ability to serve customers both through shipping and those who pick up on location. The focus is on the customer and making it as easy as possible for the customer to pick up the product, or to have it shipped quickly,” said Heath.

A strategic mindset is also crucial to maintaining the right inventory levels in each distribution center throughout the entire year. “It’s not as simple as just increasing all the inventory numbers,” cautioned Heath. “We’re looking very specifically at

demand and seasonality at each of these locations to determine how variations affect how we should stock. There may be more demand for a particular product in January than there is in July, so we’re being smart about that. It’s not just about more volume of everything at each location,” he added.

It all adds up to more robust inventory at each distribution branch. “Stock levels at all locations are being evaluated and improved, especially for system parts like KP and vehicle systems. We’re trying to make sure we have everything on-hand to make things easier and quicker for the customer,” Heath pointed out.

“This is all part of improving lead times for customers,” Heath added. “Production is doing a great job of ramping up and meeting our strong sales performance. As soon as completed products hit the floor, we’re working to get them from Trussville to our distribution centers. We can react really quickly here in Trussville because our distribution center is 50

feet from our production line. The distribution centers can’t be quite as nimble, so we work to get them more of what they will need as quickly as we can,” he observed.

With an eye on permanently improved lead times, Amerex has committed significant resources to

these logistical projects. “We’re very appreciative of the investment that our company leadership has made in these newer, larger facilities, these special racking projects and more. These can be costly projects, so we’re appreciative to be able to implement them for the betterment of the customer in the long run,” enthused Heath.

The goal, of course, is to ensure that yet another aspect of Amerex customer service helps keep quality behind the diamond. “It makes it easy when you have complete support from upper management. Those two distribution center moves show that management is completely supportive of our efforts to shorten lead times with distribution improvements. That makes it easy for me,” Heath concluded.



# NO WEAK LINKS IN CHAIN RESTAURANT FIRE PROTECTION



**W**hen you walk into a Popeyes or a Texas Roadhouse, you're probably focused on one thing: the delicious meal you're about to enjoy. Whether it's a famous chicken sandwich from Popeyes or a hand-cut steak from Texas Roadhouse, most diners are thinking about what comes out of the kitchen, not what's inside it. But behind the scenes in many Popeyes and Texas Roadhouse locations, an Amerex KP kitchen fire suppression system stands at the ready to protect lives and property. Michael Gaston, Product Manager – Restaurant and Industrial Systems, said, "Chain restaurants are increasingly working with our distributor and original equipment manufacturer (OEM) partners to find that Amerex has the right fire suppression system to fit their needs."

The premise of a chain restaurant is to take success from one location, find ways to make it repeatable and improve efficiency and package it for additional locations so that operations are as streamlined as possible. Popeyes and Texas Roadhouse repeat their respective successful formulas across locations, and these two major national restaurant chains are also repeating the inclusion of KP to protect their team members and property.

Why is Amerex's KP system the right fit for chain restaurants? Jamie Knowles, Sales Manager – Restaurant and Industrial Systems says the advantages for end-users are many. "First," said Jamie, "is its adaptability in the Zone Defense setup. That means restaurant operators don't need to modify their fire suppression system

over the course of inevitable changes in kitchen appliances or layout."

Michael added, "Restaurants typically outlast their appliances. As appliances are changed out or upgraded, an appliance-specific setup has to be modified, re-tested and re-certified. If a particular area under a hood is protected with KP with Zone Defense, that area is protected thoroughly





regardless of the appliance configuration under it.”

End-users also find the system advantageous because, Jamie said, “using KP across locations keeps bills of materials, design and installation processes consistent, predictable and streamlined.” Finally, the system offers potent fire suppression, with plenty of pressure to produce quick knock-down. Thanks to our fantastic partners, whether OEMs or distributors, chain restaurant operators are able to find the adaptability, repeatability and firefighting power they crave in the KP system.

For Popeyes, KP came into the picture thanks to a kitchen hood OEM. The KP system comes preinstalled on the hoods in some new Popeyes locations and Amerex ships the remaining necessary components so that everything is ready on-site and installation and testing are streamlined.

“Our relationships with hood manufacturers ensure there are more Amerex systems in the marketplace and it increases the opportunities for installations and long-term maintenance and service work for our distributor partners,” Michael noted.

“We’re focused on getting our systems in the market so our distributors have plenty of demand for the product. We have KP in numerous U.S. and international locations. In the world of multi-unit restaurant operations, a franchisee likes it to be turnkey, and we’re able to help deliver that with the KP system,” added Michael.

With Texas Roadhouse, Amerex systems made their way into the kitchen through Koorsen Fire and Security, a long-standing partner. “We’ve had a lot of shared success with Koorsen installing Amerex kitchen systems in



Texas Roadhouse locations across the country for many years,” said Jamie. These systems help protect people and property in Texas Roadhouse kitchens where significant hazards exist thanks to the presence of extremely hot appliances for cooking succulent steaks, ribs and more. While most of the KP installations in Popeyes and Texas Roadhouse locations use a mechanical release module (MRM), Amerex is also seeing growth in the presence of the new STRIKE Electronic Control System in chain restaurants like Freddy’s Frozen Custard.

In Freddy’s locations, another valued distributor partner, Allstate Fire Company of Independence, Missouri,

has helped convert some locations from MRM to STRIKE because, as Jamie puts it, “STRIKE is 100 percent supervised and provides more data on the history of system events, so it’s a smarter system for the end-user and it’s easier to maintain in the long-term with less concern about grease buildup.”

Overall, it’s safe to say the appetite for Amerex KP kitchen fire suppression systems in chain restaurants is certainly increasing, thanks to our valuable partnerships with OEMs and fire equipment distributors. Those relationships are the key, says Michael. “If a distributor has a relationship with an emerging chain, I’d love for that distributor to come back to us and help catch them early as they begin to expand, work with them on pricing and standardizing the bill of materials, and we can help them expand in an easily repeatable way.”

Now, with the debut of the Amerex Preferred Installer Network for KP systems, it’s easier than ever for distributors to help protect restaurants – whether a single location or a national chain.





## ALL IN FOR CUSTOMERS



**DEBBIE LAYFIELD**

**D**ebbie Layfield is a devoted spouse, loving mother and grandmother and, when she walks through the doors of Amerex's corporate headquarters in Trussville, Alabama, a relentless and spirited problem-solver. Debbie leads our Customer Service team, helping build relationships and solve problems for Amerex customers around the

country and around the globe. Her team of eight spends the day answering phones, emails and faxes to help things run smoothly for Amerex customers. We sat down with Debbie to learn more about her team, her work and the philosophy that guides Amerex's exemplary Customer Service team.

Debbie has worked at Amerex for 41 years, beginning in production and moving to Customer Service in 1997. In 2009, Debbie took on leadership of the department. Debbie's household is all about Amerex – she is married to Senior Production Manager Jeff Layfield. Together, they have three wonderful children and eight precious grandchildren with whom they love to spend quality time. Outside of their dedication to work and family, Debbie and Jeff like to travel as much as they

can. Whether she's interacting with her team or speaking with a customer a thousand miles away, Debbie keeps a smile on her face and is unfailingly kind and polite.

"My favorite part of the job is working with customers and building relationships along the way," said Debbie. The key for Debbie and her team is simple: listening. "The most important thing is to listen to the customer and immediately focus on solutions. We're solutions-oriented, and we emphasize always ending the interaction on a positive note. Customer service helps set Amerex apart," noted Debbie.

How does Debbie's team approach customers with challenging issues? "We just live the golden rule and treat everyone as we would like to be treated. We put ourselves in the customer's

shoes. I tell my team, even though you don't see the customer, put a smile on your face because customers can sense if you're approaching their problem with a friendly disposition."

Debbie's quick to note she couldn't deliver a customer care and service experience worthy of the Amerex brand without a great team behind her. "I feel like I have the best customer service team in the world. They work very hard to take care of customers in a timely

manner, and they are very sincere and motivated personally to make sure customers are taken care of and satisfied," said Debbie. "Customer Service may be the first interaction, but it takes everybody, the entire company, to deliver the kind of experience that we want our customers to expect," she added.

The Customer Service team is comprised of eight team members, including one via McWane International who handles international customers

with queries for Amerex. Their day-to-day work includes answering phone calls, emails and working in customer portals – "just taking care of the customers," as Debbie put it. "We have a family atmosphere on the team – really the entire company does. We cultivate that environment with fun Amerex outings like going to the McWane Science Center or Dave & Buster's. We get to know each other as people," she said. Speaking of getting to know them...

## MEET THE CUSTOMER SERVICE TEAM

### GIDGET YEAGER

- Joined Amerex in 2011 as our Sales Administrator and Executive Assistant
- Has been married for more than 30 years and has two children, a son and a daughter.
- Loves getting the chance to make a difference each day for our customers.
- Hobbies include hiking, shopping, visits to Nashville and enjoying sunshine and water at the beach.

### MARIA SILVA

- Handles international sales via McWane International.
- Joined Amerex in July 2016 working in production, then joined International Customer Service in 2017.
- Has six children and nine grandchildren.
- Is very family-oriented – she is great at sharing home-cooked meals with her children and grandchildren
- Enjoys working at Amerex for the family environment.

### MANDY STANFORD

- Joined Amerex in 2007 with the Customer Service team.
- Family includes husband, Chris, and three children.
- Teaches Sunday school to a lively group of middle school boys.
- Enjoys reading, crafting and watching Alabama football.

### KAYLA BROWN

- Started at Amerex as an intern in her senior year of high school in the Accounting and Sales departments. After high school, she decided Amerex was where she wanted to be.
- Has been with Amerex for 10 years.
- Her family includes husband, Robby, and their two children.
- Hobbies include spending time with family, crafting and watching Alabama football.

### RITA OVERBY

- Has been with Amerex for 31 years, 11 on the Customer Service team.
- Worked in production for 20 years prior.
- Has been married for 41 years and has one daughter, one son and one grandson who occupies much of her time.
- Enjoys the outdoors, working with flowers and walking her dog.

### LESLI MELVIN

- Joined Amerex three years ago.
- Married for 23 years.
- Has five children, two daughters-in-law and eight grandchildren.
- Has worked in customer service for 26 years because she loves working with people and building friendships along the way.

### SHARON MINYARD

- Has been with Amerex for 35 years, 10 on the Customer Service team.
- Started working in production and has held several jobs throughout the company.
- Is thankful to have made so many friends at Amerex along the way.
- Enjoys spending time with her daughters and grandchildren, getting outdoors and watching her oldest grandchild play baseball

### BRANDY REID

- Joined Amerex in 1997 and moved to the Customer Service team in 2013.
- Has a daughter and two godsons.
- Spends lots of time with her family, friends and pets.
- A member of the 501st Legion, a Star Wars-related charity organization.

# AMEREX 2020

# EVENTS CALENDAR

Event Description	Location	Dates
KP, IS & VS Training	Las Vegas, NV	Mar. 2-4
CONEXPO-CON/AGG	Las Vegas, NV	Mar. 10-14
AUSA Assoc. of the US Army	Huntsville, AL	Mar. 16-19
KP & IS Training	Charlotte, NC	Mar. 17-18
TSD/Transporting Students Disabilities	Frisco, TX	Mar. 22-23
KP & IS Training	New Orleans, LA	Mar. 24-25
Northeast Loggers	Bangor, ME	Apr. 3-4
TBB/Thomas Built Buses Exh.	Savannah, GA	Apr. 12-13
Expomin	Santiago, Chile	Apr. 20-24
KP, IS & VS Training	Canada	Apr. 21-23
KP, IS & VS Training	Chicago, IL	Apr. 28-30
FEMA	Chicago, IL	May 5-6
WasteExpo Tradeshow Exhibit	New Orleans, LA	Nov. 5-7
Elko Mine Expo	Elko, NV	June 1-5
STN/Student Trans Network Central Exh.	Indianapolis, IN	June 4-8
Eurosatory	Paris, France	June 8-13
Euro Mine Expo	Sweden	June 9-11
STN/Student Trans Network West Exh.	Reno	June 10-15
NFPA Conf. & Expo	Orlando	June 15-18
KP & IS Training	Seattle, WA	July 21-22
KP & IS Training	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	Aug. 11-12

Event Description	Location	Dates
KP & IS Training	Cleveland, OH	Aug. 25-26
NJAFED	- TBA -	
ExpoMina	Lima, Peru	Sept. 12-14
KP & IS Training	Marlborough, MA	Sept. 15-16
Oil Sands Minexpo	Fort MacMurray	Sept. 16-17
MINExpo	Las Vegas, NV	Sept. 28-30
Kp & IS Training	Sacramento, CA	Sept. 29-30
CalSafe	Monterey, CA	Oct. 4-5
APTA	Anaheim, CA	Oct. 12-14
AUSA Assoc. of the US Army Exhibit	Washington, D.C.	Oct. 12-14
KP & IS Training	Allentown, PA	Oct. 13-14
NCAFED	Concord, NC	Oct. 13-15
PAFED/Annual Conference	Grantville, PA	Oct. 16-18
KP & IS Training	Dallas, TX	Oct. 20-21
PAFED Annual Conference	Gainesville, PA	Oct. 21-23
FEMA	Palm Beach, FL	OCT. 21-23
Euro Bus Expo	Birmingham, UK	Nov. 3-5
VS Training MWI	Miami, FL	Nov. 3-5
BusCon TMG Exhibits	Philadelphia, PA	Nov. 15-17
KP, IS, & VS Training	Trussville, AL	Dec. 1-3

## NAFED 2020

Location	Dates
Las Vegas, NV	Mar. 5-6
Atlantic City, NJ	Apr. 2-3
Chicago, IL	May 7-8





NEWS STAFF/HAL YEAGER

The Trussville company Amerex Corp., best known for making fire extinguishers and other fire-protection products, is emerging as a military subcontractor.

## Amerex to put out fires in new armored vehicle

By RUSSELL HUBBARD  
News staff writer

Trussville's Amerex Corp. is emerging as a major military subcontractor after developing a fire suppression system being deployed on U.S. military vehicles often targeted by mines and homemade bombs in the Middle Eastern combat the-

ater. The new military business has led to full employment at the company best known for making fire extinguishers and other fire-protection products.

Sales of fire extinguishers tend to follow the general economy and growth in new buildings, General Manager

Bill Beyer said. So the numbers are down in that business as the economy continues to sputter. Twenty workers volunteered for layoffs last June.

But military sales of special fire suppression systems for armored vehicles are up — way up.

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### AMEREX: Company at full employment

From Page 1A

"We have recalled everyone who was on lay-off and employment is back up to about 500," Beyer said.

Amerex, which is owned by Birmingham-based McWane Inc., is a subcontractor of Oshkosh Corp., a maker of heavy-duty trucks for the military, fire departments and garbage haulers. Last year, Wisconsin-based Oshkosh won a \$1 billion Defense Department contract to make a new all-terrain vehicle called the M-ATV, which can carry four soldiers plus a gunner, operate on rough ground and shield occupants from mines and bombs.

Such a vehicle has been in demand on the battlefields of the Middle East, where venturing off-road can mean flipping over, a potential disaster when in combat.

A major part of the vehicle's safety system is the fire suppression gear made by Amerex for Oshkosh. It uses optical sensors and other technology to detect fires and explosions in less than a blink of the eye, then automatically directs a series of jets and hoses to put out the fire with a suppressive substance.

The Amerex system monitors the engine compartment and crew cab. Another company supplies suppression systems for the wheel wells. Beyer said an important part of the technology



NEWS STAFF/HAL YEAGER

Woneile Beard and Ellen Gann inspect and clean burrs from parts at the Amerex factory.

was settling on a suppressive agent that wouldn't harm the crew.

"Our system puts out engine compartment fires within 30 seconds and crew cab fires in 250 milliseconds," Beyer said. "That is the blink of an eye — one-quarter of a second."

Beyer said the Trussville-manufactured systems are put into crates and trucked to Oshkosh for installation in the armored vehicles.

Oshkosh has agreed to supply about 2,300 M-ATVs to the military. Another sub-

contractor handles the armor that protects the vehicle's occupants. The Defense Department has said it expects to deploy as many as 6,000 M-ATVs in the next year or so. That's good news for the economy in Trussville.

"We are the area's largest industrial employer," Beyer said of the growing city about 15 miles northeast of Birmingham.

Amerex has also been good for parent company McWane, which operates iron foundries worldwide that supply underground water pipes and valves and fittings to the waterworks industry. The slow economy has deeply cut into sales, McWane Chief Executive Ruffner Page said.

"Amerex has been a real bright spot for us," Page said. "And the work they are doing is saving lives."

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# THIS MONTH IN AMEREX HISTORY

**W**e're proud to look back to an announcement made 10 years ago this month. In March 2010, Amerex made headlines, emerging as what the Birmingham News called "a major military subcontractor" thanks to the deployment of our vehicle fire suppression systems in Oshkosh Corporation's U.S. military vehicles, including the armored vehicles that face threats from mines and improvised explosive devices in the Middle Eastern combat zone. Amerex Defense's vehicle systems can detect and extinguish cabin compartment fires in the blink of an eye.

Amerex's partnership with Oshkosh helped us get back to full employment despite facing stiff economic headwinds in the midst of the recession. At the time, McWane Inc. CEO Ruffner Page said, "Amerex has been a real bright spot for us. And the work they are doing is saving lives." We couldn't have said it better ourselves. Amerex Defense continues to equip Oshkosh military vehicles like the JLTV with heavy-duty, military-grade fire detection and suppression power.



# AMEREX INVESTS IN SUSTAINABILITY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS



At Amerex, our responsibility to our business customers, families and communities is to be an environmentally responsible partner. What do you think of when you hear environmental compliance? Take a moment to reflect upon your personal efforts to be environmentally responsible. When I hear the phrase “environmental compliance,” I think about sustainable efforts both at work and at home that preserve our wonderful resources for future generations. My name is Chuck Freind, and I am the Environmental Manager for Amerex. For more than

two decades, I have worked to ensure that future generations have the necessary resources to sustain and prosper. I graduated from Jacksonville State University in 1994 with a B.S. in biology, and returned to the classroom later in my career to earn a B.S. in business and an MBA from the University of Alabama.

At Amerex, company-wide environmental efforts instill our team members with the same sustainable-effort mentality. Team members participate annually in a McWane Inc. program called the Pollution Prevention Challenge. This program allows team members to think of various ways that our operation can reduce its environmental footprint, with the opportunity to win up to \$1,000 annually for the best ideas. From reductions in the quantity of materials used for making parts to large-scale recycling efforts and container projects, Amerex team members have helped reduce the amount of waste produced and, ultimately, given our operation a smaller environmental footprint.

On the product side, we converted our wet spray applied paint coating to

powder coating to give our products better weather resistance in the field while reducing our volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and hazardous waste generated by the operation. In addition, we recycle over 525 tons of aluminum, brass and steel annually. These materials, along with dry chemical cylinders and cardboard packaging, are fully recyclable. Amerex products contain no heavy metals or hexavalent chromium. Amerex has been ISO 14000 certified since 2004 and is currently certified to the new ISO 14000:2015 standard.

Through our factory operations and our products and the communities they serve, Amerex will continue to strive for excellence in environmentally sustainable solutions for future generations.





# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

WELCOME TO THE TEAM, JOHN FOLEY



**A**merex is pleased to welcome John Foley to the team as Regional Sales Manager – Northeast. We're excited for you to learn a little more about John in his own words, and for our many partners in the Northeast, we hope you get the chance to meet John soon.

"I am a Seton Hall guy through and through; I played ice hockey while attending both Seton Hall Prep and Seton Hall University, where I majored in political science. I'm a Veteran of the U.S. Army.

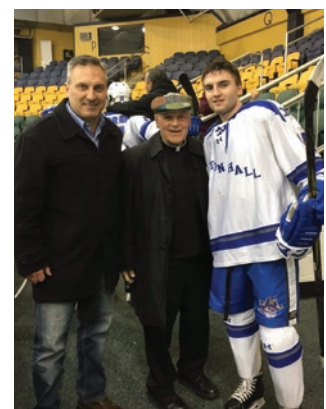
I successfully ran my own business, starting from the ground up to eventually become a national service provider with a particular strength in the Northeast.

Once the company sold, I was able to apply my acquired skills and established network working as a manufacturers representative for several years. I've helped manufacturers

develop their distribution network and subsequently conducted pull-through marketing, leading to significant growth in the Northeast and on a national level.

Through it all, my most cherished role has been that of husband and father. Outside of work, I enjoy golf, hockey and cooking. I'm a New York Giants fan and a fan of anyone playing against Dallas.

This is an exciting time to join such an amazing group of professionals on the Amerex team!"



# DISTRIBUTOR FEATURE WITH JOSÉ DE OLIVEIRA ASSUNÇÃO

Say Alo to one of our international fire equipment distributor partners in Brazil, Jose de Oliveira Assunção, General Manager of Argus Produtos e Sistemas Contra Incendio Ltda (Argus for short). Argus is based in Vinhedo, Sao Paulo, with a branch in Belo Horizonte. Opened in 1978, Argus has become known throughout Brazil for its highly trained staff's fire suppression expertise and for the quality of its product installations. Jose was kind enough to take a few minutes from his busy schedule to tell us more about his work distributing Amerex fire suppression solutions in Brazil.

**Amerex: How long have you been with your current company?**

**Jose:** I founded Argus in 2010, but I have worked in the fire protection industry since 1978. Since 2010, I've run the company's operations here in Brazil with an emphasis on fire suppression system integration.

**How long has your company distributed Amerex?**

**J:** We started distributing Amerex shortly after I established Argus. Argus buys fire suppression and safety products from companies based in the United States, Europe and Asia, and then we integrate them here. We work with partners to handle installation. We do our research in deciding what

kind of products to distribute. We looked into other manufacturers, but we really wanted to put an emphasis on quality and to have the backing of the UL listings and verifications on our products, so we went with Amerex, and it's definitely been the right decision.

**Why do you choose to distribute Amerex products?**

**J:** The quality of the products is number one. Our philosophy is to choose high-quality products with UL and/or FM listings, so for vehicle systems and kitchen systems, that was an easy choice. We distribute pre-engineered fire systems for vehicles and kitchens, and Amerex's offerings fit our market's needs exceptionally well.



“THE QUALITY OF THE PRODUCTS IS NUMBER ONE.”



**What kind of customer industries do you serve?**

**J:** We have a really wide variety of customers. For the vehicle systems, we have customers in mining – mostly for gold or iron – sugar cane (we protect the storage tanks, the vehicles for the entire site and the harvest), forestry, food manufacturers, sugar mills, refineries, data centers (using the NOVEC clean agent), paper and pulp facilities, chemical and oil companies, hospitals, hotels and restaurants. We have customers throughout Brazil and South America – Colombia, Peru – and parts of Africa.



For example, when a food company is planning to open a new manufacturing plant, they contract with us for all the systems inside the plant, and we create a total fire protection system throughout the plant.

**Has your business experienced any highlights or significant moments recently?**

**J:** Yes, two recent highlights come to mind. First, I am very proud of the success we had helping protect sugar cane harvesters with Amerex vehicle systems. We were able to reduce a customer's losses from 11 harvesters a year to zero. The harvesters are exposed to a lot of hazards in the cane fields, with a lot of combustible material and sources of ignition. For this particular customer, we performed all the work from risk analysis, test-equipment installation, project approval and installation in 350 harvesters in just three months while training about 2,000 people – that's just inside of one group in Brazil to support a new plantation. We had a team of around 25 people working seven days a week to make it happen. We helped reduce the major fire incidents in the plantations with Amerex vehicle systems from more than 200 per year to nearly zero.

Second, another success story was the change in the Brazilian kitchen hood protection standard, requiring the protection of kitchen hoods and ducts with fire systems that meet NFPA and UL 300 certification. Until September

2019, two systems were required, one for hoods and one for ducts where CO2 systems were used. This change is a major technical improvement for the consumer as well as a cost-saving benefit. As an industry leader in South America, we worked alongside our partners at Amerex to help accomplish this regulatory change. We have been able to specify and sell the Amerex products in the Madero restaurant group in Brazil, and we are very hopeful for more growth in kitchen protection in the next few years, including integrating the new STRIKE Electronic Control System.





# PRODUCT UPDATES

## FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Amerex is happy to be your preferred partner for the fire extinguisher industry, supplying a complete line of reliable, high-quality dry chemical, carbon dioxide and stainless steel extinguishers.

We're proud to produce the highest-quality fire extinguisher on the market today. The Z-Series line of high-performance extinguishers is a huge success, providing an environmentally preferable corrosion-resistant product to the market. A 12-year warranty and a UL-verified marketing claim highlight our commitment to the ruggedness and reliability of the product line.

Our commitment to innovation and development continue with our new line of BrX fire extinguishers. We're working hard to bring new items like this to the market. This new clean agent is designed specifically for the aerospace industry and is a very effective replacement for Halon 1211 extinguishers. A 5B:C rating and an FAA approval mean this product will work in most aircraft. Stay tuned for further developments!



# KITCHEN AND INDUSTRIAL FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS

As 2019 concluded, our industrial dry chemical line continued to grow with its industry-leading Total Flood Perimeter coverage, and our KP kitchen systems line with the addition of the STRIKE Electronic Control System also had a very solid finish to the year. Our focus on ease of use and internal efficiencies for the KP line (detailed in the Fall 2019 newsletter) paid off, as we were able to hold pricing on KP to help you win more business with Amerex KP in 2020.

On the ease-of-use front, we made great strides to ensure that it is easy to get the KP information you need where, when and how you need it. We have updated the KP component booklet to include all service and repair parts, rendering our 2010 parts book obsolete. The new simplified parts booklet contains images from 3D models along with descriptions of each component and service part. We will refer to this new booklet during training classes. You can expect to see an industrial systems version soon as well. The KP parts booklet is posted online and will be in the McWane Pocket Engineer app soon.

We also worked with the team at Flash-Soft to make sure they had the most up-to-date KP and IS information, including the new parts booklet, in the drawing software that we know many of you use. It now has even more Amerex features when generating hassle-free drawings to meet local permit requirements. If you

use Flash-Points, we encourage you to check it out, and we look forward to integrating with other providers in the future. We also have an Excel-based KP estimator that can help you generate a bill of materials (BOM) for any KP system. It works for Zone Defense or Appliance-Specific setups and can be a MRM, PRM, STRIKE system. If you haven't seen it yet, ask the sales team or a member of our KP/IS team for details.

We continue to see more STRIKE systems with KP sold each month. We foresee this trend continuing thanks to the system's simple plug-and-play wiring and installation, its continual monitoring to ensure the fire system is always ready and the long-term benefit of detection lines and corner pulleys that cannot clog with kitchen grease. We hope to bring some exciting improvements to the already-great STRIKE system in 2020. Starting at the end of 2019, we have begun to see chain restaurants swapping other systems for KP with STRIKE as their standard. Speaking of chains, they are a key focus area for us in both kitchen and industrial systems. Please let us know if you do a lot of work with an individual chain and are interested in how we can help take that relationship to the next level through

separate accounts, standard BOMs or other potential improvements. Everyone on the KP/IS team is ready to help. We also have tools and drawings for those of you who work with designers – items like 3D models and specification documents are posted in the KP section of the Amerex website.

For our United States-based KP installers, you should have received an invitation to join our Amerex Preferred Installer Network. This network is focused on bringing our OEM hood partners together with valued KP distributors across the nation. This partnership between distributors and hood manufacturers will ensure that hood manufacturers know the installation pricing for any style of job upfront and that our distributors set pricing that aligns with their given market areas. This will be a win-win for both groups!

As always, we encourage you to look at the event calendar in this issue for training dates to become certified on kitchen and industrial systems. If you're interested, log in to our training site for more info, or contact your Regional Sales Manager to sign up!



# PRODUCT UPDATES CONTINUED

## VEHICLE FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS

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Look out for new product information from Amerex vehicle systems coming soon! We are preparing to introduce a J1939/CAN interface. The CAN, or Controller Area Network, receives messages from the Amerex fire suppression system regarding the status of the system and relays those messages to computers and maintenance personnel. This valuable tool helps save downtime and can alert personnel of real-time events such as a fire condition.

Have you considered talking with your school districts about vehicle fire suppression systems for school buses? Last summer, the NTSB issued a report on a tragic school bus fire in Iowa where, sadly, the bus driver and a student lost their lives to a fire in the vehicle. The NTSB report on the fire concluded that a fire suppression system offers major safety benefits in helping prevent unnecessary death

or injury from bus fires. Further, the report recommended that fire suppression systems be required on all new school buses. As a result of the investigation and report, congressional action is taking place now with the School Bus Safety Act, which adds a number of safety features to school buses, including a requirement for fire suppression systems on all school buses. At this point, the bill is in the sponsorship stage and is not yet law. Be sure to listen for information on this important subject as it is debated in Congress. In the meantime, call on your school districts. Many are aware of the NTSB report and the legislation moving in Congress, and they might just be ready to say yes when you ask them if they have considered making their fleet safer for operators and passengers with Amerex fire suppression systems on their buses.





## MILITARY SYSTEMS



Toward the end of 2019, the Amerex Defense team, Vice President of Sales and Marketing Ben Pitts and Regional Sales Manager John Foley attended the three-day Association of the U.S. Army (AUSA) Show in Washington, D.C. This show is probably the biggest show in the world to showcase current defense products available in the marketplace. This year, the AUSA show had more than 37,000 attendees. Pictured above are Ken Mier, Amerex Defense General Manager, John Foley and Tad Halcomb, Amerex Defense Sales Manager.

Amerex teamed with Milton Manufacturing to display our vehicle system capabilities, including the all-important crew cab system that we currently provide to Oshkosh Defense for the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV), purchased by the U.S. military. We also showed wheeled units with high demand in the military, the model 775 3M™ Novec™ 1230 and model B674 Halotron. We showcased this equipment in our newly created, dedicated booth, and it was well-received at the show.



We had very good traffic all three days with key end-users coming by to meet the team and discuss potential opportunities or products coming to



market. Many of our customers were also there with their own booths, showing their products as well as ours. Several foreign government representatives stopped by to see what we had to offer. It continues to be an exciting time at Amerex Defense, and we look forward to what 2020 has to offer.

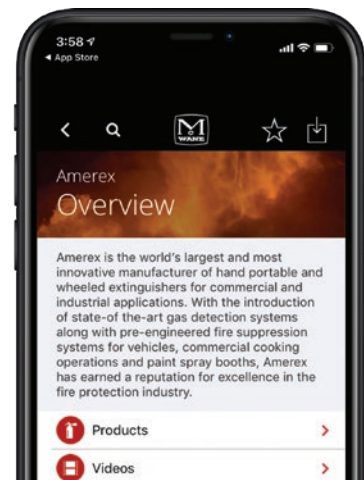
# ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

*From small, everyday actions to major process investments, Amerex is committed to being a good environmental steward. Here are just some of the steps we've taken to ensure our operations are sustainable and environmentally friendly.*

- Since 1971, we've recycled steel, aluminum, brass and paper scrap and waste.
- We annually recycle more than 525 tons of scrap aluminum, brass, stainless steel and steel.
- Since 2004, we've been ISO 14001 certified. Amerex was the first fire extinguisher manufacturer in the industry to earn this environmental certification. Amerex is currently certified to the new ISO 14001:2015 standard.
- Important factors in gaining and maintaining these certifications include our on-site waste water treatment, oil filtration and recycling, air emissions reduction efforts, closed loop system for reduction of water usage and our status as having both a very small quantity of hazardous waste and a low-VOC generator.
- Finally, everybody's favorite: we annually sponsor a fantastic fry team in the Cahaba River Society's Cahaba Fry-Down fundraiser.

## POCKET ENGINEER

Keep important Amerex information at your fingertips via the McWane Pocket Engineer app or by visiting [pe.mcwane.com](http://pe.mcwane.com).



## WHY AMEREX

### Quality

Amerex didn't become a global market leader overnight. Our business has grown year after year based on our products' reputation for performance and durability in even the most rugged environments.

### Innovation

Because Amerex is independently owned and forward thinking, we are continuously innovating and investing for the benefit of our customers and those they serve.

### Service

Amerex was founded upon a mutual appreciation for premium quality in products and customer service and the importance of interpersonal relations.



Quality is Behind the Diamond



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