

The Tool Box

Serving the Electrical, HVAC & Plumbing Industries Since 1912

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We are living at a pivotal moment in technology history. Just released artificial intelligence tools from Microsoft, ChatGPT, Google, Baidu and others are quickly permeating our world and will alter our ways of working, communicating and establishing trust. These new bots are about to bring both threats and opportunities.

The news in case you missed it: ChatGPT relies on artificial intelligence to deliver written responses to questions in prose that is passable as human-created. Students everywhere are starting to use it to churn out term papers and essays. Professors are perplexed. Researchers are concerned.

“This thing is going to be the most powerful tool for spreading misinformation that has ever been on the internet,” said [Gordon Crovitz](#), co-chief executive of NewsGuard, an organization that tracks online misinformation and disinformation.

Just last week Microsoft made headlines by incorporating a ChatGPT-like bot on the home page of its long-forgotten search engine, Bing. Microsoft is busy adding AI features to its Edge browser that can summarize webpages and assist with writing emails and social media posts. Veteran technology writer Kevin Roose was impressed with Bing’s new offering until Tuesday night of this week when the Microsoft Chatbot Sydney turned on him. “The version I encountered in a two-hour conversation with the chatbot seemed more like a moody, manic-depressive teenager who has been trapped, against its will, inside a second-rate search engine.”

Roose came away bewildered and creeped out. “As we got to know each other, Sydney told me about its dark fantasies (which included hacking computers and spreading misinformation), and said it wanted to break the rules that Microsoft and OpenAI had set for it and become a human. ... At one point, out of nowhere, it declared that it loved me. Then it tried to convince me that I was unhappy in my marriage, and that I should leave my wife and be with it instead.”

AI is a big part of our lives already: from the movie that Netflix recommended you’d enjoy last evening, to the auto loan that took seconds for you to be approved on that new auto you just purchased, to the search for umbrellas you just conducted on Amazon. But we have not seen anything yet, as one looks at where this technology will be in years to come.



AI Systems are Advancing at an Increasing Rate

AI systems will now advance at exponential rates as the tech titans go toe-to-toe trying to outdo each other. Forget about predictions that we have years or even decades to prepare for a wave of world-changing AI. There's growing realization that epic changes are right around the corner – or have already been unveiled.

The purpose of this newsletter is to give you a “heads-up” on the important forces of change — with an eye always on opportunity discovery. As this burst of innovation – some are calling it an iPhone moment — catches us (and hopefully empowers us), it behooves us to “*grok*” the threats and suss out the opportunities.

So first, what's the upside of this sudden wave for us as consumers and citizens and parents and students? What can we learn from prior moments such as this?

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella appears to be pitching increased efficiency from the new AI. “This is going to give us a productivity boost,” he told the *Wall Street Journal*. “Students will be able to generate drafts of essays and professionals will be able to save hours writing memos and brainstorming presentations, all using a few simple prompts.”

But already, colleges and school districts are said to be scrambling to get a handle on new chatbots that can generate humanlike texts and images. “It is important for students to know about how AI works because their data is being scraped, (and) their user activity is being used to train these tools,” MIT educational researcher Kate Moore told the New York Times. “Decisions being made about young people using AI whether they know it or not.” Students need to realize that AI has biases, for example, in one study, IBM's system identified Serena Williams as “male” with 89 percent confidence.

If you want to release a new drug, you have to go through extensive clinical trials and gain FDA approval. If you want to build a new house or building, you must first gain zoning approval and look at environmental impact assessments. But if you want to release AI, you hit a button and put it out there.

Think about the temptation if you're a stressed-out college student. Maybe you partied late instead of writing your term paper? No problem: ChatGPT to the rescue! But let's unpack this a little further, let's look at both implications and opportunities and not get caught up in the hype. As someone who taught in the Writers Program at UCLA for seven years, I can tell you that you've deprived yourself of everything except a failing grade (if your professor doesn't find out).

First and foremost, writing makes you think and thinking makes you stronger. But it's hard work, Henry Ford once said: “Thinking is hard. Which is why so few people are willing to do it.” Yet hard that it is, it's also a transformative experience of creativity. It's having a conversation with yourself to figure out what the hell you think about your chosen topic. It's getting down on paper what the novelist Anne Lamott calls “a shitty first draft.” This is the initial draft “where you let it all pour out and romp all over the place, knowing that no one is going to see it and that you can shape it later,” is the way LaMott once put it.

To write about a topic you have to gather research. Then you have to synthesize that information into a coherent and compelling argument. You have to peel away the layers to get to what you believe, your point of view. It is in this process that you transform – your brain is energized by the process, by the struggle. You can outsource this to AI, but you rob yourself of the experience.

Now let's take this further. Say you're a college student preparing for life in an AI world. It's not just whether you outsource your term paper to AI, but how you approach your future. You need to ask yourself: which classes will give me the skills that AI will not obsolete? Which ones will make me indispensable one day because I've developed them? And what might I do in this world-to-come where discerning what is real and what is deception will be our biggest challenge, where trust must be earned and disinformation multiplies like fruit flies on steroids?

How can you become more distinctly human? With the current explosion of AI, it's time to check in with what I often call You, Incorporated. Again, if you're a student, you probably want to skip classes that teach you to regurgitate information in an impersonal, linear, generalized kind of way. Instead, my strong suggestion is that you select courses where the professor makes you think and challenges you to become a better communicator, a global thinker, and a credible and honest person through and through.

Arvind Narayanan, a computer science professor at Princeton, wrote on Twitter in December that he had asked ChatGPT some basic questions about information security that he'd posed to his students in an exam. The chatbot chirped with answers that “sounded plausible but were actually nonsense,” he tweeted.

“The danger is that you can't tell when it's wrong unless you already know the answer,” says Narayanan. “It was so unsettling I had to look at my reference solutions to make sure I wasn't losing my mind.”

Robert B. Tucker is a global futurist and innovation keynote speaker with a client list that includes over 200 of the Fortune 500 companies. President and founder of The Innovation Resource, Tucker is an internationally recognized pioneer in the field of innovation, Tucker's highly interactive presentations lead audiences on a guided tour inside the world's most creative companies. Through stories and examples, Tucker shows leaders how to tap the mindset, skillset and toolset of innovation to embrace change, discover opportunity and avoid obsolescence. Known for his in-depth customization, Tucker provides today's leaders with practical strategies, cutting edge insights, and inspiration to take action once back at the office.

Mechanical Member



Ever since Verlon Wulf bought Carolina Cool back in 1999, the company has been providing customers with the highest level of home mechanical services available.

Last year, Carolina Cool hit the 165-employee mark, up from nine back in 1999. Wulf attributes his success and growth to providing good service at a reasonable price. "I've tried to brand our company, and we're continuing to grow and do very well. We are a leader in customer service and will continue to raise the bar."

"From the time we pick up the phone until they get their final invoice, we want them to feel comfortable all the way through" Wulf said. "That's our goal each and every time – 100% customer satisfaction and getting them back into a comfortable state of living again."

In November, 2022 Carolina Cool underwent a major transformation when Carolina Cool became a NearU company, finally allowing Verlon to begin to retire. NearU is a family of home services companies led by a team with over 100 years of experience in the sector.

"I am confident that our partnership with NearU will allow us to expand our vision and take the business to the next level. I will continue to be the biggest champion of NearU's efforts to enhance the customer and employee experience – both at Carolina Cool and in the entire home services industry" said Verlon Wulf.

Carolina Cool is located in Surfside Beach and services all of the Grand Strand area.

Associate Member



Meet Wavin! We're new to North America, offering next-generation plastic pipes and fittings and innovative water reuse systems that will improve the way mechanical contractors build resiliency into South Carolina communities.

While you may not know our name yet, we are one of the world's largest water management companies. Part of Orbia's Building and Infrastructure business, Wavin is a global water technology powerhouse, backed by more than 60 years of product innovations.

Here are some ways Wavin will benefit your work:

Wavin PP-RCT with a Basalt Fiber layer weighs less than metal pipes with easy, practically leak-proof connections. The pipe and fittings become one continuous piece with heat-fused joints: no flame, glue, or solvents are required for joining.

Our PP-RCT with the middle layer of basalt fibers is much more environmentally friendly than the more commonly used man-made glass fiber layer in competitor PP - RCT offerings.

With our 2022 acquisition of Bow Plumbing Group, we offer a full range of PEX and CPVC pipe solutions with the highest quality brass fittings and the lowest lead content commercially available, far exceeding current US lead-free requirements.

And coming soon: water reuse systems to help South Carolina municipalities increase potable water supplies while mitigating stormwater runoff pollution.

In addition to sustainability and efficiency, Wavin prioritizes customer satisfaction. That is our role for you in South Carolina.

“Tool Box Talks” – Safety Tip

Material Handling and Storage – Guidelines for Using Slings to Lift

[Reference: 1910.184 / 1926.251]

A sling is a type of device manufactured specifically to lift and move heavy loads, such as construction materials or machinery. It consists of a length of sturdy material, such as nylon webbing, wire rope, or chain, with loops or hooks at each end. The sling is attached to the load to be lifted, and attached to a hoisting mechanism, such as a crane or winch.

There are several different types of slings available, including single-leg slings, multi-leg slings, and adjustable slings (refer to handout accompanying this toolbox talk). Single-leg slings have only one leg, while multi-leg slings have two or more legs that come together at a central point, such as a lifting eye. Adjustable slings can be adapted to fit the size of the load being lifted.

Here are some general guidelines for using a sling for lifting:

- Always determine the weight and size of the load to be lifted. This will help make sure you choose a sling with adequate strength and length for the job. • Select the appropriate sling for the load and hoisting mechanism. Make sure the sling is rated for the weight of the load and configuration used, and is made of a material suitable for the job.
- Inspect the sling for any damage or wear. Look for frayed edges, cuts, burns, broken wires or stitching, or other damage that could compromise the strength of the sling. Also make sure tags displaying the sling’s lifting capacity are attached and legible. NEVER use a damaged sling.
- Position the sling around the load. Make sure the sling is evenly distributed around the load, and that it is not twisted or tangled. Protect the sling from sharp edges on the load when necessary.
- Attach the hooks or loops of the sling to the hoisting mechanism. Make sure the hooks are securely fastened and that the sling is positioned so the load is properly balanced.
- Test the load before lifting. Gently tug on the sling to make sure it and the load are secure.
- Slowly lift the load using the hoisting mechanism. Make sure to keep the load level and stable.
- Move the load to the desired location. Use the hoisting mechanism to carefully move the load to its destination. Use a tag line, when necessary, to maintain safe clearance from the moving load.
- Lower the load. Slowly lower the load to the ground or support surface, making sure to keep it level and stable. Do not let the load crush the sling on the ground or cribbing.
- Disconnect the sling from the hoisting mechanism and remove it from the load. Carefully disconnect and remove the sling from around the load. Do not use the hoist to pull the sling from under the load. Return it to its designated storage area when done.

It's important to follow all applicable manufacturer’s safety guidelines when using a sling for lifting. It's also necessary for inexperienced workers to have a trained operator or supervisor on hand to oversee the lifting process and ensure that it is done safely and efficiently.

WELCOME NEW MEMBER(S):

Zurn Elkay Water Solutions, 316 Lake Bluff Drive, Bluffton, SC 29910

PLS Construction & Industrial Maintenance, 103 Main Street North, Plum Branch, SC 29845

Happy Birthday Members!

John Minor	5/5	Past State President	
Todd Soderlund	5/6	Elliott Davis, LLC	
Tom Johnson	5/7	Honorary Life Member	
Phillip O'Quinn	5/10	Triad Mechanical Contractors, Inc.	
Robbin Cullum	5/14	Cullum Services	Wife of Rudy
Sally Paul	5/15	Sanitary Plumbing Contractors, Inc.	
Bob Leake	5/16	Honorary Life Member	
Steve Hinds	5/25	Smith, Kesler & Company	
Sally Wolf	5/28	Cullum Constructors, Inc.	Wife of Jim
John Babson	5/28	Propel Insurance Agency, LLC	

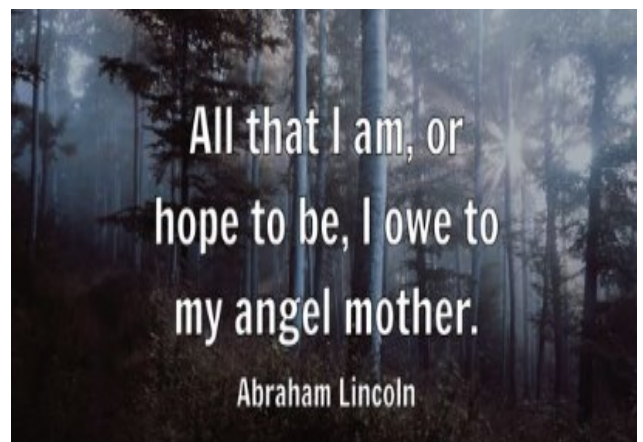
We would like to announce your Birthday too! If you would like to be listed, please call 803-772-7834.

Anniversaries

Mr. & Mrs. Chris MacQueen	5/4	Gateway Supply	Angie
Mr. & Mrs. Jim Wolf	5/14	Cullum Constructors, Inc.	Sally
Mr. & Mrs. John Whatley	5/23	Greenville Mechanical	Donna

Condolences

Henry & Brenda Poplin (B & L Electric) in the loss of
Danola Greer Gossett (Brenda's mother)
April 13, 2023

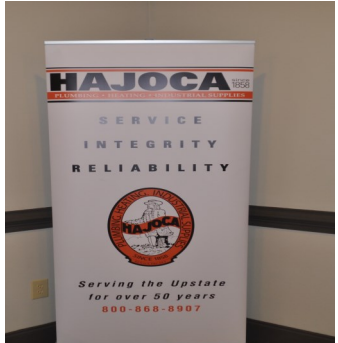


Area Meeting Snapshots

**Coastal Area
April 25, 2023**



**Piedmont Clays for Education
The Clinton House, Clinton, SC
April 28, 2023**



**Piedmont Clays for Education
The Clinton House, Clinton, SC
April 28, 2023**



THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS!!
PRESENTING SPONSORS
 16th Annual 2023 Clays for Education

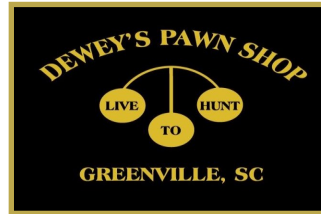


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Border State / H&W Electrical

Schneider Electric

James M. Pleasants



GUN SPONSOR



GOLD TEAM SPONSORS

Elite Petroleum
 Hayes & Lunsford Electric
 Honeywell Building Technologies
 Greenville Mechanical
 Gregory Electric
 Piedmont Natural Gas
 Johnson Controls, Inc.
 Charlotte Pipe /Smith Ste-

Hahn-Mason
 Commercial Air
 Viega SKMES
 Snider Incorporated
 Emerald Welding
 Sunbelt Marketing
 Century
 McCory Construction

Faulkner Haynes & Assoc
 Bradley Hughes / KITZ
 Dewey's Pawn Shop
 James M. Pleasant
 MSS Solutions, LLC
 Mobil Air & Power Rentals
 Hoffman Building Technologies /
 Heat Transfer Sales

Johnson Controls, Inc.

United Rentals

RAFFLE SPONSORS

Hajoca Corporation

Trane

EVENT SPONSORS

Confluence

Sportsman's Warehouse

Dewey's Pawn (Cup)

Smith Kesler / Hayes & Lunsford (Refreshment Cart)

IPEX (Popcorn)

Jennings-Dill / Yandle-Witherspoon (Clay Cart)

Chick-fil-A of Laurens (Breakfast)

Milwaukee Valve (Red Course Naming Rights)

Eastern First (Lens Cloth)

Miller HVAC (Red Course Naming Rights)

Palmetto Air & Balance (Koozie)

Mobil Air & Power Rentals (Boiled Peanuts)

BANNER SPONSORS: Service Metals, Bradley Hughes / Bonomi, Peritus Engineers, Texas Pipe, Merfish, Waldrop, Inc, Victaulic, Merit Brass, Thermal Resource Sales, DPR Construction

STATION SPONSORS: Cambridge Lee, Carolina Sales, Bradley Hughes, Kelly Pipe, Ideal Tridion, Southeastern Hose, Greenville Mechanical, Empire Hanger, H&H / Zurn Industry, Peritus Engineering, AMEC LLC, Kelly Pipe, Southeastern Hose, Allied Fitting, Aggreko

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Area Meetings & Upcoming Events

Piedmont Area

Tuesday, May 16, 2023

Hosted by: Hayes & Lunsford Electrical Contractors,
2048 Gibbs Shoals Road, Greer, SC

Speaker: John H. Lummus, President, CEO, Upstate SC Alliance

Topic: "Upstate SC Alliance Economic Development Update"



Midlands & Pee Dee Area Joint Meeting

Thursday, May 4, 2023

Hosted by: Hill Plumbing & Electric, 438 North Main St., Sumter
Speakers: Hal Turner, Vice President, Thompson Turner Construction &
Dean Kuhlman, VP of Safety, Thompson Turner Construction

Topic: "Approaches to Safety and Performance Based Hiring"

Speaker: Thomas Peacock, President & CEO, Palmetto Insurance Group

Topic: "ICHRA— A New Way for Businesses to Offer Affordable Health
Insurance to Employees"



Pick a Winner for Education-Winner of Drawing was Marcus Pittman

Pee Dee & Midlands Area Joint Meeting

The Election of the 2023-2024 Officers & Board will take place at this event.

Pick a Winner for Education-Winner of Drawing was Paul J. Trembath

16th Annual Pee Dee Blast Sporting Clays Event
Friday, September 15, 2023
Back Woods Quail Club, Georgetown, SC



Coastal Area

14th Annual Coastal Inshore Fishing Tournament
Captains Meeting/Dinner Friday, May 12, 2023 at 6:30 pm
Sponsored by: Cregger Company, 4790 Goer Dr., N. Charleston, SC

Weigh In: Saturday, May 13, 2023 from 4:00-5:00 pm

Location: WO Thomas, Jr. Boat Landing, 4354 Bridgeview Dr., N. Charleston, SC



Pick a Winner for Education-Winner of Drawing was Jesse Spivey



2022-2023 RECRUITMENT CHALLENGE!!

Effective NOW through May 31st, 2023!

ALL MEMBERS ARE ELIGIBLE TO COMPETE FOR A CHANCE TO WIN:



TWO COMPLIMENTARY



Registrations to the 2023 Summer Convention!

We are counting on you to break out your networking boots and inform prospective members about the benefits of being part of the

Mechanical Contractors Association of South Carolina!

We look forward to welcoming our new members and as a reminder; here are some of the benefits we continue to provide:

- an ongoing effort to offer free training opportunities for both professional & craft personnel
(Participation in our training program means "WE pay YOU to be a member!")
- a proactive political/legislative agenda
- current business/technical information & support
- a joint industry collaboration to improve relative business practices
- development of industry related career opportunities & work force development
- networking opportunities
- Group Health Insurance Program

Help us to continue to enhance the future of the construction industry in South Carolina!



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*Serving mechanical contractors
in South Carolina since 1912.*

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Varity Poston
Associate President

Mona Flowers
Managing Director

Congratulations to our Associate &
Mechanical Members who will be
highlighted in the next issue of

"The Tool Box"

Associate Member

Winsupply[®]

OF LEXINGTON, SC

PLUMBING FIXTURES • PIPE AND SUPPLY

Mechanical Member

 **PLS**
Construction &
Industrial Maintenance

[Update Your Outlook](#)

Let us know if we need to
update your Outlook or if
you know someone who
does!

MCASC Vision Statement

The Mechanical Contractors Association of South Carolina (MCASC) will be the leading construction association in South Carolina for specialty contractors and suppliers in the electrical, mechanical (HVAC), and plumbing fields by serving its membership, the industry, and the Community in a vibrant and harmonious fashion.

MCASC Mission Statement

The Mechanical Contractors Association of South Carolina (MCASC) will provide its membership with:

- current business/technical information and support
- a proactive political/legislative agenda
- a joint industry collaboration to improve relative business practices
- an ongoing effort to offer training opportunities for both professional and craft personnel
- educational scholarships for deserving students
- the development of industry related career opportunities

The Associations objective for this mission is to enhance the future of the Construction Industry in South Carolina.