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Featured in this issue:

PINE ENTERPRISES

Suwanee, Ga., firm specializes in residential water and sewer connections

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Jean and Bob Cabral own Pine Enterprises along with their sons Greg Russell and Mike Cabral





**RELIABLE EQUIPMENT
RESPONSIVE SERVICE**

A SALUTE TO A TEC CUSTOMER

PINE ENTERPRISES

Suwanee, Ga., firm specializes in residential water and sewer connections

Bob Cabral started in business as a plumbing contractor in 1971 in Tulsa, Okla. In 1985, when work was slow to nonexistent in the Tulsa area, Bob moved the business to Norcross, Ga. Eventually, he sold the plumbing company and started an underground utility firm with his two sons, Greg Russell and Mike Cabral.

“In the beginning, it was literally just the three of us, plus my wife, Jean, who has always taken care of office duties for the family business,” Bob recalled. “Greg and Mike were the field crew. We just went about getting jobs and tried to make a name for ourselves

as a company that could be counted on to do quality work and get it done on time.”

Today, their company, Pine Enterprises, is one of the leading providers of residential sewer and water services, not just in the Atlanta area, but throughout Georgia, and in neighboring states as well. Now headquartered in Suwanee, Ga., with offices in Ellenwood and Canton, the company also has locations in Tampa and Orlando, Fla.; Greenville, S.C.; Nashville, Tenn.; and Mesquite, Texas. In addition, Pine Enterprises has a commercial division that does right-of-way work, road bores, and larger-scale sewer and water work in developments.

“We believe what separates us from competitors is our size and our professionalism,” said Greg, who serves as Residential Division Manager. “Many companies that do what we do, which essentially is connect the water and sewer lines from the house to the street, are very small operations. We started out that way too, but now have taken it to another level. We’ve done as many as 12,000 to 13,000 houses a year. Because of our size, we’re able to respond quickly; we’re able to put multiple crews on a job if necessary; and we’re able to provide emergency services seven days a week. We believe our strength is the level of service we’re able to provide our customers.”

Pine Enterprise’s work tends to be about 75 percent to 80 percent residential, with the remainder commercial.

“On the commercial side, we do what the big guys don’t want to do,” said Mike, who serves as Commercial Division Manager. “We take on strip centers and subdivisions. We do a lot of backflow preventive work. We work

Jean and Bob Cabral, along with their sons Greg Russell and Mike Cabral, own Pine Enterprises, a leading provider of residential sewer and water services throughout the southeastern U.S.





Pine Enterprises has a fleet of about 25 Komatsu compact hydraulic excavators, most of them PC50MR-3s, like this one at work in Forsyth County, Ga.



Pine Enterprises' job primarily is to connect sewer and water laterals from the house to the street.

on the smaller sewer mains, say 12-inch pipe and 200- to 300-foot runs, the type of jobs that we can do more cost effectively than the large underground firms. We'll also do many jobs that require slow and careful digging around utilities."

Veteran and talented work force

Pine Enterprises' work force tends to fluctuate, depending on work load. The company has been as large as 100 employees.

"We have excellent employees," acknowledged Bob. "The average employee has been with us five years or more and many have been here more than ten years. The experience they bring to the job is one of the big reasons we're able to be as productive and effective as we are."

"Our philosophy regarding employees is to promote from within, which gives people a way to advance within the company and gives them an additional reason to stay with us," noted Greg. "Every new hire starts laying pipe, then can work his way up to operator and perhaps to field superintendent, if that's what he wants."

"The other good thing about our hiring practices is that everybody learns the job from the ground up," added Mike. "Once they get in an operator's seat, they fully understand what the pipe guy is going through, which makes them better operators. They also learn the Pine Enterprises way of doing a job and dealing with customers."

Productive, reliable equipment

In order to do its residential and commercial work quickly and efficiently, Pine Enterprises has turned to a large fleet of Komatsu compact excavators from Tractor & Equipment Company. Pine has about 25 of the units, including PC27s, PC35s and primarily PC50s. The company also has a Komatsu PC160LC-7 for its larger commercial work.



Pine Enterprises switched from backhoe loaders to tight-tail-swing compact hydraulic excavators during the past few years because, according to Greg Russell, Residential Division Manager for Pine, "There's less room to work today. Komatsu tight-tail-swing excavators allow us to work more effectively in cramped quarters, and safety is improved as well."

"We used to do our work with backhoe loaders, but over the years, homes have gotten larger, and lots, in many cases, have stayed the same or gotten smaller," said Greg. "The end result is there's less room to work. The Komatsu tight-tail-swing compact excavators allow us to work more effectively in cramped quarters, and safety is improved as well."

Pine's Komatsu units all have a long stick that provides more than a foot of additional reach. "They're very productive machines for us," confirmed Pine's Georgia Division Manager Shane Rosser. "Our operators like them a lot."

According to Area Manager Wes Hall, the Komatsu excavators have also been very reliable. "We don't have nearly as many breakdowns as we had with another brand



Mike Cabral,
Commercial Division
Manager



Greg Russell,
Residential Division
Manager

Continued . . .

Pine Enterprises looks to the future

... continued



Shane Rosser,
Division Manager



Wes Hall,
Area Manager

we used before turning to Komatsu. As a result, repair costs are lower, and even more important, productivity is higher due to increased machine uptime."



Pine Enterprises designed its own trucks, eliminating the need for a trailer, to transport its Komatsu compact excavators.



In addition to the compact excavators, Pine Enterprises has a Komatsu PC160LC-7 for larger commercial work.

(L-R) Mike, Jean and Bob Cabral and Greg Russell are the ownership/management team at Pine Enterprises, headquartered in Suwanee, Ga.



Responsive, efficient service

Both Bob and Greg say they've been very pleased with the Komatsu equipment, but they say the service they get from Tractor & Equipment Company is even more important to them.

"I'm old-school," admitted Bob. "To me, this business has always been built on relationships. You've got to be able to trust your supplier and know he's working for you and going to take care of you. TEC has taken great care of us and we're very happy with them."

"If we need them to make a repair or help with maintenance, they're right on it," added Greg. "If a unit breaks down and we need a replacement, they take care of it immediately. If we need a machine in Tennessee, they handle it for us. Bottom line, TEC understands our needs and acts accordingly."

Optimistic about the future

Despite the recent housing slowdown, Pine Enterprises remains upbeat about the future.

"We've downsized a little to reflect the slower residential economy, but we don't view this as a 'gloom and doom' environment," commented Bob. "We know that eventually the market will adjust and correct. It always has and always will. So we're taking this dip as an opportunity to fine tune our business so when it does turn back up, we'll be ready to take full advantage of it."

"I'd say long term, we're still looking to grow the business," said Greg. "I don't know that we necessarily ever planned to be this big back when we were getting started, but having become a good-size firm, I think we'd prefer doing more rather than scaling back."

"Both Greg and I are still fairly young and we enjoy this industry," added Mike. "We helped build Pine Enterprises, and now we run it for the most part. We're pleased with what we've accomplished, but we still hope to do much more. We take a lot of pride in what goes in the ground on our jobs. Our regular customers understand that and appreciate it, and we're confident that when builders get busy again, we'll get busy right along with them." ■