



THE TREE LINE

News for Sunland Construction & Affiliates

**January 2020
Edition
Gotta Dig-it**

Your Hard Work in the Spotlight. Thanks for your hard work, your professionalism and workmanship have kept jobs in the pipeline.

There are a number of jobs currently underway. If you are between jobs and are looking for a good opportunity, feel free to contact the Division Office to find out what work is available.

“Foremost Pipeline”

While Foremost didn’t have quite the explosive start to FY20 that Sunland as a whole had, a strong showing in both November and December helped propel the division to its best Q1 on record (fiscal year). A year ago, Foremost posted losses in both of those months, so expectations are starting off on a high note for FY20.

In regards to our safety record, Foremost almost achieved back to back years of Safety Excellence with just one recordable in September of 2019. The crews have since continued to have a strong focus on safety with no recordables in Q1 of FY20. Driving safety continues to be a challenge, but only one at fault accident was recorded in November and none were recorded in December. We are hopeful that even though this improvement was seen during two of our slower months, it will start a positive trend for the rest of the calendar year.

Foremost is looking forward to kicking off our Annual Safety Training on January 31st in Columbia, SC. In addition to the traditional topics, the meeting will begin with some opening remarks from Keller Kissam, President of the Electric Operations of the Southeast Energy Group of Foremost’s main client. There will also be discussions around some new topics, like the Gold Shovel Standard, stem boring and Operator Qualifications with ITS. A similar meeting is planned in Florence, SC for February 28th.

At the request of our main client, Foremost kicked off calendar year 2020 by becoming officially enrolled in the Gold Shovel Standard. While the merits of the latest resurgence of

this initiative can be debated, at the end of the day Foremost was already doing the vast majority of what the standard requires. Long term, it will likely push the crews to be more disciplined about taking pre and post job photos and capturing all the pertinent details when damages are incurred. As much as anything, this initiative has the potential to drive the daily use of technology with our crews.

As we begin Calendar Year 2020, we continue to be thankful for the position in which we find ourselves. Business is steady for both the gas and electric blanket contracts in every geography with maybe one exception, and our blanket contract with our main client in Greenville recently received a nice increase. We are sad that our long time Office Manager, Wanda Eslinger, is choosing to retire in May, but are excited for her and the fun times she has ahead spending time with her grandchildren! We have truly high hopes for a safe and prosperous 2020.



Panoramic photo towards the start of a job in Ridgeville, SC laying and drilling over 20,000 ft. of 8” steel.



HSE Coordinator Tim Haechten (center) assists Foreman Hector Morales (left) and Kevin Metcalf installing a service in Henderson, NC.



Dylan Stephenson, Chase Frisbee, and Dakota Waldroup install a gas main in Asheville, NC while Superintendent Robert Praytor monitors.



In Aiken, SC Dylan Heald installs an electric service while Foreman James Lucas looks on.

PipelinePEOPLE

Dedicated Employees



“Foremost Staff Team Outing”



Desmond Ashford, Todd Wingard, Tim Haechten, Peggy Eck, Darrell Hendrix, Ben Hughes, Wanda Eslinger, Steven Price, Jeff Gindlesperger, Robert Praytor and Wyley Williamson “enjoyed” trying to get out of an escape room in Columbia, SC as a team outing in November.



Tim Haechten

Every year for the past 18 years, the Gaston Masonic Lodge in Gaston, SC has taken orders for fried turkeys prior to Thanksgiving. Foremost’s Tim Haechten has been integral in both founding and maintaining this fundraiser over almost two decades. Tim will have been with the Foremost and Sunland family for 34 years in February and before stepping into his current role, he was General Manager at Foremost for over 22 years and also Division Manager for the Rocky Mountain Division for 4 years. He still wears his signature cowboy hat every day and is well known as a rock-star in the pipeline industry in and around the Carolinas.

On the Tuesday and Wednesday before Thanksgiving, the turkeys are injected and fried, ready for pick-up all-day Wednesday. They are put in an oven bag for easy re-heating on Thanksgiving Thursday and have that fresh out of the fryer taste as a result. The lodge has sold as many as 350 turkeys in previous years, which makes for a lot of cooking. This year 250 were pre-sold.

This feat would be almost impossible in the typical one pot per turkey scenario, so Tim designed and the lodge constructed two custom built troughs measuring 10’ long x 18” deep x 12” wide, which will cook as many as twelve 14lb. turkeys at a time. The design also lends itself to being able to cook with a minimal amount of oil, saving costs and minimizing waste.

The money raised from this fund raiser is used for lodge expenses during the year along with supporting the lodge’s charitable causes. This fundraiser provides support for widows and orphans, other Masonic groups, and various charities. If you’re in the Carolinas in November and in need of a delicious turkey, stop by the Gaston Masonic Lodge. The aroma of all those turkeys hitting the fryer is probably worth the trip alone.



Turkey Trough

Co-worker Connection



*Wanda Eslinger
Office Manager
Foremost Pipeline*



Which company do you work for and how many years of service? I work for Foremost Pipeline and I will have been with them for 26 years this coming March.

Tell us about your family? I am married to my wonderful husband, Jim, for 19 years. I have one daughter and two wonderful grandchildren.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time? I do a lot of reading. I also enjoy crafting with my best friend, Joan Hayes. And, of course, shopping with my “sister”, Angela Revels.

Where do you see yourself (career wise) in 10 years? I will be retiring and having a ball with my grandchildren. I am retiring from Foremost on May 29, 2020.

This year, what has been your biggest work-related challenge? Adjusting to the demands of our largest client as they were taken over by another entity and changes were made regarding paperwork requirements and deadlines.

This year, what has been your biggest work-related achievement? This was a great achievement for all of us here in the office and that is the fact that after working for many years, all of my staff is pretty much cross-trained so that we do not have gaps in meeting the everyday items of someone is out.

If you could have dinner with anyone past or present, who would it be and why? That would be my grandmother on my Dad’s side of the family. She had a lot of influence on me when I was growing up and was very wise. I have had some things happen that I really could have used her advice on.

From Our Desk to Yours

“Certainties in Life”

During the last year of his life in a letter to French scientist Jean-Baptiste Le Roy, Benjamin Franklin coined what many consider to be his last great quote:

*“Our new Constitution is now established, everything seems to promise it will be durable; but, in this world, nothing is certain except **death and taxes.**”*



Most of us have heard this idiom before in one form or another and Franklin wasn't even the first to use it, but the publication of some of his letters in 1817 helped make it a staple in popular culture in America. While I believe that this Founding Father was spot on with his quote, I argue that one other certainty exists in life: **Change**.

This third certainty hits close to home with Foremost as our main client in the Carolinas continues to drive change at a hurried pace. In fact, one of the core values of their new parent company is *Embrace Change*. Even when they were in the midst of their merger, we heard from employees at every level to expect change and that the new sheriff in town was serious about it.

Of course, given the number of moving pieces they had at the time, the destination wasn't always clear for any given change. What anyone learns the hard way who deals with change is that it has a natural cousin, *ambiguity*. Often the most frustrating part of change is that it involves a moving target and not everyone deals well when the target keeps dodging your arrow.

At Foremost, it became clear that we were going to have to deal with a large amount of ambiguity and embrace change ourselves. We were going to have to stay determined and survive these changing times. We were going to have to survive through flexibility and innovation.

Does any of this sound familiar?

Perseverance – The determination to survive changing times through flexibility and innovation

It turns out that one of our own core values takes *Embrace Change* to a higher level. Perseverance says to not only expect change, but to be ready to navigate your way through it and survive, or preferably, thrive. We plan to thrive. That is also certain.

Jeff Gindlesperger
Foremost GM