IN THIS ISSUE

ASPE American Society of Plumbing Engineers™ BALTIMORE

MEETING FORMAT

6:00 - 6:30	Social
6:30 - 6:45	Announcements & Table Tops
6:45	Dinner Served
7:00 - 8:00	Moderated Panel Discussion

Register Today

DATE:	December 15, 2025
TIME:	6:00pm to 8:00pm
PLACE:	The Valley Inn
TOPIC:	Everything Plumbing Engineers Do Wrong Part 2
PANELISTS:	Chris Imhof, PE, CPD, Technical Standards Engineering Manager at WSSC Water and Vice President, Legislative for ASPE Baltimore
	Nick Bowley, PE, Director of Engineering at Bowley Jones Engineers
	Joseph Bowman, AIA, NCARB, Architect at GWWO Architects
	A special guest panelist representing the plumbing installer's perspective

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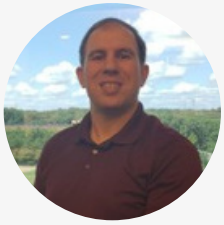

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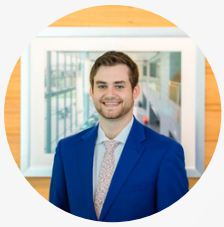

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PL-101

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Chuck Swope, PE, CPD, LEED AP BD+C
Chapter President

As the year winds down, it is a natural time for reflection. With Thanksgiving in our recent memory and Christmas, Hanukkah, and other celebrations with similar intentions coming soon, our thoughts turn to the importance of family and community. After all, we're stuck inside with each other during these cold months, so it's better to think nice things, right? Kidding aside, I am grateful for those that are closest to me and the people that I choose to be with and that includes you, the dedicated reader. Your choice to read the President's message in your local technical society's newsletter demonstrates a key truth: professional growth is a shared effort. Whether you are here for the camaraderie, the technical knowledge, or the professional resources, we gather for all our benefits. Throughout my tenure, the chapter has experienced significant changes, and we are committed to learning and growing stronger from every adjustment.

Speaking of growth and change, I am pleased to report that the new program, a shared initiative with the DC and Philadelphia chapters focused on engineer-led technical, has launched successfully! As many of you know, my preferred presentations are those that return to the fundamentals. I've always believed that with a solid grasp of the basics, you can apply those concepts and break down those that are complex. At it's core, hot water recirculation is simply a hydronic circuit that dissipates heat. Once this foundation is understood, we can confidently tackle complex issues, from managing return temperatures in a commercial kitchen to handling pressure zones. The essential tools are readily available; we just need to know how to access them.

I have been a member of ASPE since 2012, and an active participant long before that. Over this time, I have made lasting friends, traveled far beyond what I imagined, and even unexpectedly developed skills as a public speaker. All of these opportunities and accomplishments are thanks to the support and engagement of this community. I owe my career and achievements to you.

Your Chapter President,
Chuck Swope


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Julian Chiveral, PE, CPD, LEED AP BD+C
Vice President- Technical & Education Chair

Technical Report

The Holiday season is in full swing, so we've got a special meeting here planned for the Baltimore ASPE Family in December. More details below but here's what you need to know:

- Topic: Everything Plumbing Engineers Do Wrong
- Format: 60-minute moderated panel discussion with audience Q&A
- Date/Time: Monday December 15th, 6-8PM
- Location: The Valley Inn, 10501 Falls Rd, Timonium, MD 21093

The Thanksgiving leftovers are finally gone, but what hasn't run out is my gratitude for Chuck Swope for his insightful presentation on hot water recirculating systems. Thank you, Chuck, for your time and expertise! I'm sure Chuck would be happy to continue the conversation if anyone has any questions – as always he can be reached at cswope@muellerassoc.com.

Now for the December meeting details I promised; we've got a lineup of experts in the field who are ready to dish on everything us plumbing engineers get wrong. I've always been a fan of the sentiment: "Why learn from your mistakes when you could learn from someone else's?" and I'm hoping that's what our panel discussion will embody. Our panel will feature:

- ·Chris Imhof, PE, CPD, Technical Standards Engineering Manager for WSSC Water and Vice President, Legislative for the ASPE Baltimore chapter
- ·Nick Bowley, PE, Director of Engineering at Bowley Jones Engineers
- ·Joseph Bowman, AIA, NCARB, Architect at GWWO Architects
- ·Top Secret Panelist, representing the Baltimore area's plumbing installers
- ·Moderator: Julian Chiveral, PE, CPD, Mechanical Engineer at CMTA and Vice President, Technical for the ASPE Baltimore chapter
-

As the moderator, I've got questions prepared for our panelists but please bring your own questions! And while you're thinking about it, bring your junior engineers as well! I'm excited for the insights and anecdotes our panelists have to share, and I'm sure there will be valuable lessons to learn for all. I'll see you on December 15th at the Valley Inn!

Julian, VP-T

Working with an Existing Slate: Plumbing Considerations for Building Renovations

From Plumbing Engineer, a PHCP Publication
August 13, 2025.

DNora Ureche is a plumbing engineer in training at EUA, based in Milwaukee. She holds a master's degree in architectural engineering from the Milwaukee School of Engineering and is a member of the American Society of Plumbing Engineers.

Starting a new construction project as a plumbing designer allows me to create the initial plumbing systems for the building's life: utilities, equipment and piping routes. Designing the concept of a new building allows me to spread my wings with my drafting skills, but retrofit projects can be challenging.

Plumbing engineers lack the luxury of a blank slate when designing for retrofits — the building is already there, with a slew of components living in the plenum and underground that need to be coordinated around. Instead of having free rein, retrofits demand that designers take extra steps. They call for evaluating the existing drawings and building conditions, and considering the new scope. Existing, demolished and new components blend.

It can be overwhelming to keep track, which is why I collect an abundance of information before opening Revit.

Where to start?

Evaluating existing conditions from the client is the most important step in any building renovation project. How are the existing plumbing systems used? How do they work? What upgrades will be required to ensure the system runs seamlessly and fulfills the new demands of the building?

Obtaining existing construction documents from the client is the best place to start. As-built documents provide the most up-to-date information, which can be used as a reference for drafting existing systems and current component selections.

However, it is still important to visit the site in person to verify that the documents reflect the system accurately. Small repairs and alterations could have been made that deviate from the drawings. Reviewing the system layouts allows the engineer to identify areas to inspect in person, such as specialty areas (i.e., kitchens or labs) and water/mechanical rooms.

The existing plans can contain fixture counts and water pressure calculations if these were required during plan review. These numbers help determine how much capacity remains in the existing systems, and what water pressure to expect near the property. Engineers should not rely solely on these numbers but can use them as a reference. I often calculate the capacity of the old system myself, especially if I am looking to tie into the old system and not completely replace it.

New scope

.After reviewing the existing scope, it is time to ask questions about new systems. Is the plumbing scope minimal, with only fixture updates? Is the layout of the building being readjusted? Is the building occupancy changing? Are there areas that the client wishes to keep untouched? Understanding these factors can be helpful during the site visit in identifying what parts of the existing system can be reused.

Working with an Existing Slate: Plumbing Considerations for Building Renovations

I recently wrote the basis of design for an existing two-tenant building: an office and a CrossFit gym, which would become the Froedtert Health Lafayette Clinic in Milwaukee. Understanding that the use change would require a complete plumbing system overhaul allowed me to focus on identifying possible areas for a new water room, since the existing water service entered the building in a small, exposed corner of the gym.

The site visit

Now that the existing conditions have been reviewed and the new systems have been considered, it is time to perform the site visit. In-person site visits are important to verify that the construction documents reflect the system accurately. No matter how much a design makes sense on paper, physically seeing the system will always give an engineer a better perspective. Design challenges stemming from existing conditions can be addressed then, rather than during construction through a request for information.

I start by taking pictures of all the existing fixtures and noting their manufacturers. I also record if faucets and flushometers are sensor-operated and whether they are hardwired or battery-powered. Making these notes allows me to source the same fixtures as the existing system, which makes maintenance easier, as maintenance staff often have spare parts and specific tools for the existing fixtures.

I then look at how fixtures are installed. Are the toilets floor-mounted or wall-mounted? Are the sinks drop-in or undermount? Identifying installation requirements during the site visit will help determine the project's budget. I have experienced a simple one-to-one fixture replacement evolving into a more expensive renovation because we had to replace floor-mounted fixtures with wall-mounted ones, and vice versa.

Typically, fixture replacements require minor saw cutting of walls and floors. Still, new fixture spacing and updated building code may require the installation of new sanitary and domestic water stubs.

Once I identify the fixtures and expected scope for their installation, I look at the equipment and overall function of the existing building. Identifying equipment is necessary to determine if I can tie into the existing systems with no issue, or if I will need to pull new utilities and upsize/replace equipment. Equipment may not have all the data on its labels nor reveal the exact parameters it operates under, so I measure dimensions to narrow down the piece's model. The facilities staff is the best source for identifying existing equipment.

Meet the facilities staff

The facilities staff has the best understanding of how the building operates. Engineers should make every effort to include them in the site visit. Staff can bring insight into issues the existing system has been experiencing that an engineer cannot physically see and may be unable to identify during the design process.

While performing a facility assessment for the Kewaunee High School in Kewaunee, Wisconsin, the staff mentioned issues with the sanitary line backing up because inattentive students poured grease down the sinks. I concluded that the student cooking lab would benefit from a grease interceptor that serves the student stations.

Discussing the system's operation with the end-users, such as maintenance staff, may bring forth recurring issues with how the building is currently functioning, which can then be addressed with the new project.

Budgeting

After reviewing the existing construction and design documents, considering the new scope and conducting a site visit, what do you do with all the information? How do you use these findings to justify the new design?

Working with an Existing Slate: Plumbing Considerations for Building Renovations

Start with what typically drives a project's design — the budget. The goal for budgeting early is to prevent blindsiding clients by unexpected costs later in the project. There are many factors to consider. On a new construction project, the ideal piping routing is simple: the shortest and most efficient route using the least materials while adequately serving the fixtures.

With an existing building, however, the client and contractor may oppose unnecessary demolition just so the piping looks more uniform. There may also be finishes the client wants to preserve.

While avoiding unexpected costs in the budget is ideal, it is also important to consider the upfront costs versus operational costs and the owner's priorities. Our job as plumbing engineers is to present the benefits and setbacks of the design to the client and allow them to make an informed decision.

For example, if the equipment is nearing the end of its operational lifespan, I will recommend that it be replaced. Clients hesitate, but I explain that the equipment is either replaced now with the project or replaced in the next few years when it eventually deteriorates and causes a system failure. I try to help clients understand that it is much easier to make a planned equipment replacement than an unanticipated one that may affect the operation of the building.

Code considerations

Engineers must also consider the costs associated with meeting building codes. Retrofits can trigger requirements to bring existing system components up to current code. The Wisconsin and international plumbing codes have similar requirements for additions, alterations and renovations. Thankfully, only the new plumbing on a project needs to conform to the present code.

The 2021 International Plumbing Code, Section 102.4 states:

"Additions, alterations, renovations or repairs to any plumbing system shall conform to that required for a new plumbing system without requiring the existing plumbing system to comply with all the requirements of this code."

However, items in the present code for new plumbing can increase the anticipated scope of a project. For example, I have worked on many projects that appeared to be simple fixture replacements but became more involved because the existing systems in the building did not recirculate the hot water close enough to handwashing fixtures to satisfy the current code.

The 2015 International Energy Conservation Code, Table C404.5.1, lists allowable maximum distances for fixtures with hot water connections from an active hot water loop:

TABLE C404.5.1 PIPING VOLUME AND MAXIMUM PIPING LENGTHS

NOMINAL PIPE SIZE (inches)	VOLUME (liquid ounces per foot length)	MAXIMUM PIPING LENGTH (feet)	
		Public lavatory faucets	Other fixtures and appliances
1/4	0.33	6	50
5/16	0.5	4	50
3/8	0.75	3	50
1/2	1.5	2	43
5/8	2	1	32
3/4	3	0.5	21
7/8	4	0.5	16
1	5	0.5	13
1¼	8	0.5	8
1	11	0.5	6
2 or larger	18	0.5	4

For SI: 1 inch = 25.4 mm, 1 foot = 304.8 mm, 1 liquid ounce = 0.030L, 1 gallon = 128 ounces.

Working with an Existing Slate: Plumbing Considerations for Building Renovations

One solution would be to provide instantaneous water heaters for all the new and existing handwashing fixtures or to heat-trace the hot water system. However, suppose the building is expected to undergo alterations in the future? In that case, installing a hot water recirculation system may be in the client's best interest.

Don't work in a vacuum

Many systems will change in a building alteration, not only plumbing, so staying in touch with other engineering disciplines during the design process is critical. In addition to fitting within the existing conditions, the plumbing engineer must accommodate the other trades' new components or, in some cases, situations where existing components are removed.

I once worked on a small office renovation where the plumbing and HVAC ducts were routed under the building in a crawl space. As this was the historical location of the plumbing piping, I laid out the new piping in the same crawlspace.

I did not consider that the HVAC system would be removed from the crawlspace, transforming what used to act as the heated plenum into an outdoor space. As a result, my domestic water piping had to be heat-traced to ensure the piping did not freeze during the cold season — a cost that could have been avoided had I consulted the HVAC engineer.

Adding to the slate

Constraints in design will always be present. Plumbing codes and standards are examples I consult every day. Existing conditions are simply another constraint to work with.

The catch is that we must be diligent about our process, from evaluating existing conditions to crunching the project numbers. I'll leave you with these tips:

- ·Document everything on a site visit and take photos for reference later when designing. Use other imaging tools such as Matterport if available.
- ·Take dimensions of the equipment if the labels do not state the model number.
- ·Perform calculations to determine a system's remaining capacity; justify using existing utilities when appropriate (but sometimes, new utilities will make more sense).
- ·Gain perspective from the whole team: occupants, facilities, client, architect and other MEP engineers to provide a holistic, seamless design.

The luxury of a blank slate does have its shine, but the challenge of renovations continuously pushes me to become a more conscious designer.

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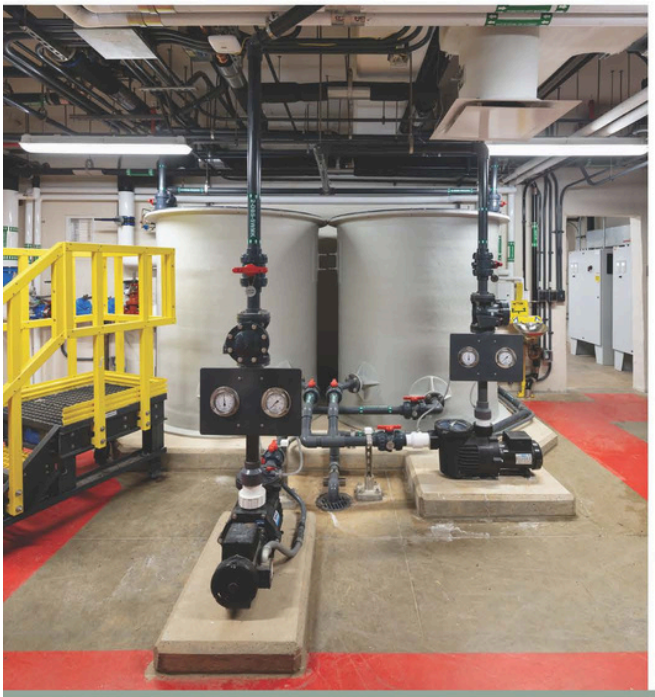

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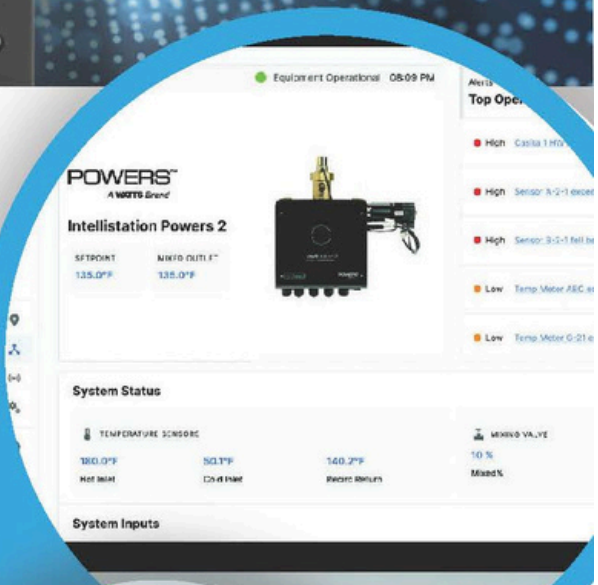

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Nicole Murphy
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Membership Report

New Members

Please join us in warmly welcoming our newest members to the Baltimore Chapter!

Margaret Frazier
Nathaly Villeda-Lindsay

Member Milestones

This December, we are especially proud to celebrate the dedication and commitment of several long-standing members:

50 Years: Robert Stryjewski
40 Years: Michael Brame
30 Years: Sherry Abbott-Adkins
10 Years: Mark Smullen, Jesse Fisher, Daniel Bender, Gregory Neary

Season's Greetings

As the year comes to a close, we want to extend our warmest wishes to each of you. Thank you for your continued involvement, support, and enthusiasm for the Baltimore Chapter. May your holiday season be filled with joy, meaningful moments, and time spent with your loved ones.
We look forward to another wonderful year together in 2026!

Wishing you and your families a very happy holiday season, I hope to see you at our December meeting!

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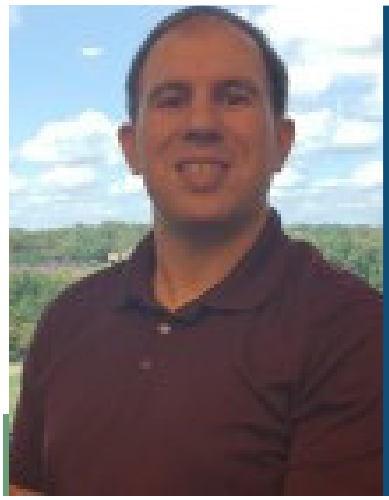

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Chris Imhof, PE, CPD
Vice President- Legislative

Legislative Report

WSSC Water Adopts 2024 WSSC Plumbing and Fuel Gas Code

On December 1, 2025, the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission adopted the 2024 WSSC Plumbing and Fuel Gas Code. The Plumbing and Fuel Gas Code can be viewed here: https://www.wsscwater.com/codebooks

For additional code-related information, contact Technical Standards Engineering Manager Chris Imhof at christopher.imhof@wsscwater.com or 301-206-8514.

ICC-ES Quietly Retracted and Revised Report on Cured-in-Place-Piping

In August, Florida's Plumbing Technical Advisory Committee members debated a proposal to clarify how Florida's plumbing code applies to cured-in-place pipe repairs — a trenchless method often used in older condos and high-rises. The discussion took a turn when opponents pointed to a document from the International Code Council's Evaluation Service, or ICC-ES, that appeared to endorse a shortcut known as "gapping." That method leaves small sections of pipe unlined at branch connections, something critics say will lead to leaks and contamination over time.

But just weeks later, ICC-ES quietly retracted and revised the report. The new version, issued on October 16, makes clear that "gapping" is not an approved installation method under national standards or Florida's plumbing code. Those standards require pipe liners to be continuous and fully sealed, with no gaps at service connections. Service connections are reopened robotically after the lining material has cured. The revision came just days after the plumbing committee voted to support new language reinforcing continuous material installation with no "gaps."

This is an excellent example of a jurisdiction reviewing model codes and standards and pushing back when they do not agree.

Read more here: https://floridapolitics.com/archives/762393-international-code-council-reversal-backs-florida-plumbing-panel-echoing-states-condo-safety-push/

New York State delays All-Electric Buildings Act, which would ban gas hookups in new buildings

New York State has agreed to delay a controversial law that would have banned gas hookups in new buildings, just weeks before it was set to take effect.

The All-Electric Buildings Act was scheduled to begin on January 1, 2026, prohibiting gas line connections in new buildings under seven stories. However, state attorneys agreed to postpone the policy until a federal appeals court makes a ruling on its legality. There are concerns about electric grid reliability and high energy costs, similar to the concerns in the DC and Baltimore area. There doesn't appear to be new information regarding laws for prohibition of gas in Virginia, Maryland, and DC.

Read more here: https://www.wkbw.com/news/local-news/new-york-state-delays-all-electric-buildings-act-which-would-ban-gas-hookups-in-new-buildings

Apply Now: Code Action Committees and the Codes and Standards Council

The International Code Council is now seeking volunteers for five ICC Code Action Committees and the Codes and Standards Council to participate in the code development process for the 2027-2029 cycle.

The International Code Council (ICC) invites dedicated volunteers to apply for committee positions in the 2027–2029 Code Development Cycle. By serving on these committees, you will help shape the 2030 International Codes (I-Codes), advancing building safety through model codes used by your communities and others globally. Your involvement directly influences the safety and well-being of approximately two billion people worldwide, ensuring that our communities benefit from up-to-date, effective building codes.

Visit here for more information:

https://www.iccsafe.org/building-safety-journal/bsj-hits/apply-now-code-action-committees-and-the-codes-and-standards-council/

Chris Imhof, PE, CPD
Vice President – Legislative

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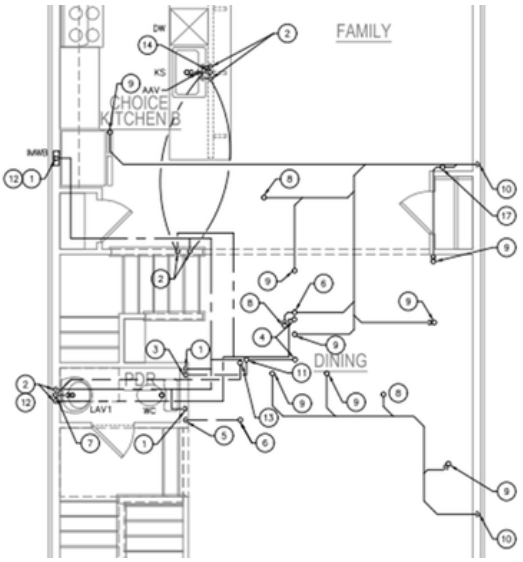
David Bailey
PLUMBING PLANS REVIEWER'S CORNER

Firstly, allow me to go on record by telling you that the 2024 IPC, the 2024 IFGC, and the 2024 WSSC Water P&FGC have been adopted by the Commission effective December 1, 2025.Thus, any permit applications submitted to WSSC Water on or after December 1st of this year, shall abide by the recent most Code adoptions. So, any drawing submissions accompanying these permit applications shall be reviewed per current 2024 Codes. (Anyone having a Thanksgiving deadline with a project?) Secondly, those who attended the Harry Eklof & Associates Fish Fry this fall were treated to very tasty feast. I want to thank Nicole Murphy for my invitation. It was a very delightful mid-day event and suggest that all should attend (at least once) when extended an evite. Finally, last month's solution revolves around the developed length of the natural gas system. Anytime a WSSC Water Project Manager sees a TDL of a gas system, a multiplier of 1.3 is used to determine the TEL. With this problem, the TDL was 100 feet. Thus, the TEL became 130 feet, and the gas table sizing row became 150 feet. With that, the branch feeds for the water heater and the floor fryer were shown to be undersized. Also, as the PM, then I suggested to the designer providing a manual shut-off valve ahead of the solenoid valve within the kitchen area. Without it, should the solenoid valve require servicing or removal, then the entire gas piping system is subject to purging. No fuel to the gas heaters during a winter servicing may introduce freezing temperatures to the formerly conditioned space. And as we all know, water systems exposed to freezing conditions is not optimal.

This month's review is the result of a project that I am about to undertake. In glancing at the first few drawings, the floor plan below drew my attention immediately but not necessarily Code item. Can you identify what I spotted drawing with the partial plan relative to the accompanying Drawing Notes?



PLUMBING NOTES:

1. ½" CW DOWN.
2. ½" CW & ½" HW DOWN.
3. 1" CW DOWN.
4. ¾" CW & ¾" HW UP.
5. 2" V DOWN.
6. 2" V UP.
7. 1½" V DOWN.
8. 3" SAN UP.
9. 2" SAN UP.
10. 3" SAN DOWN.
11. 1" CW UP.
12. WATER PIPING SHALL BE INSTALLED ON THE WARM SIDE OF THE BUILDING INSULATION TO PROTECT FROM FREEZING.
13. 1½" V UP.
14. 2" SAN DOWN.

I will be out-of-state per scheduled December's ASPE DC Chapter meeting so allow me to take this moment to wish everyone a safe and joyous Holiday Season and a Happy New Year!

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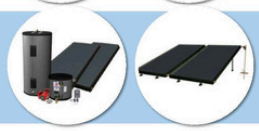

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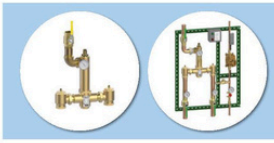

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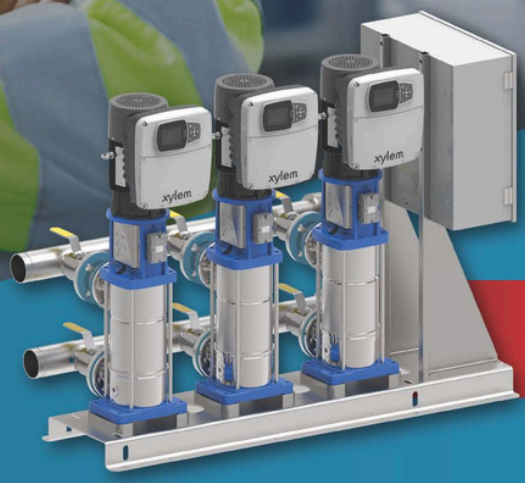

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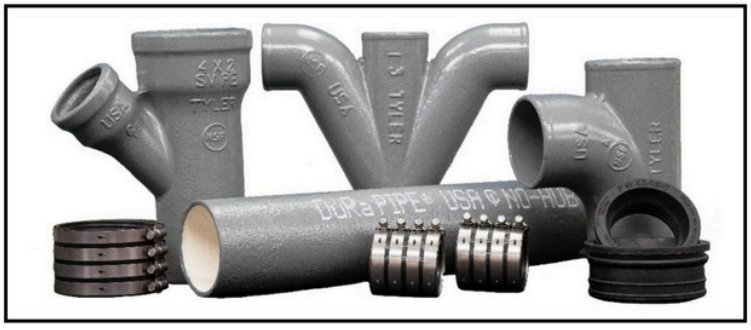

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Schedule of Meetings

DATE	Topic	Speaker
SEPT 17	Engineering Ethics And Dispute Resolution	Rebecca Bowman
OCT 15	Medical Gas	Niki Patel
NOV 19	Hot Water Recirculation Systems	Engineer Presentation - Chuck Swope (Mueller)
DEC 17	Everything We Do Wrong	Panel – moderator, code reviewer, Contractor, Sr. Engineer
JAN 28	Industry Night	Local UA486
FEB 18	Topic TBD	Engineer Presentation - Michael Do (Setty)
MAR 11	Communication Skills and Bridging Generational Gaps	Niki Patel and BJ Allen
APR 22	Fire Protection	Ken Isman
MAY 20	Topic TBD	Engineer Presentation - Joe Niedzielski (2RW)

If you have a specific topic, speaker, or case study you would like to see included in our program, please let us know. Likewise, if you or your firm would be interested in presenting at one of our sessions, we encourage you to share your availability.