

driller

Florida

Publication of the Florida Ground Water Association

1st Quarter 2020

2020
FGWA ANNUAL
CONVENTION & TRADE
SHOW PREVIEW

**POWERED BY
NATURE,
DRIVEN BY
INNOVATION:
SOLAR PUMPING**

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**2020 FGWA
ANNUAL
CONVENTION
SCHEDULE**

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KRISTINA KINZEL
LAVAL UNDERGROUND
SURVEYS

YOU ARE FGWA

How did you get started in the industry?

I started working for Laval Underground Surveys about 6 years ago, not knowing anything about the groundwater industry. I was quickly taken by not just the business itself, but the people who use our products. The men and women who work in this industry are truly the lifeblood of this country (and the world) because they supply the one thing we all need, clean water. I've enjoyed serving these same customers by working in a few different capacities at LUS (Laval Underground Surveys), now as East Coast Sales Manager. It is a privilege to have been in this industry so long and I look forward to many more years.

What year was the company started?

Claude Laval, Jr., following in his father's footsteps as a commercial photographer in California's San Joaquin Valley, was approached in the early 1940s by a local pump manufacturer who challenged him to develop a camera that could take pictures down in a water well. Rather easily, Mr. Laval waterproofed a camera and his first test pictures (taken of nuts and bolts in a drum of water) turned out perfect. However, his first real test resulted in the camera being crushed by the pressures deep in the well.

Trial and error eventually overcame a variety of challenges and before too long, Mr. Laval was operating a fleet of service vehicles equipped with his well camera systems for downhole photography.

LUS has always been apart of Claude Laval Corp (now LAKOS) but split off to form our own entity in 2006 with Garrett

Jones at the helm. How we started is always the first thing we talk to people about when describing what LUS does. We believe it is important for customers to know that we have not only been doing this a very long time, but are invested in the long-term success of our customers and the industry.

What type of work/service does the company provide?

We sell two different types of products that intertwine regularly; downhole cameras and a well rehabilitation chemical line, Boresaver. Our cameras service any borehole up to 5000', and are handmade at our facility in Fresno, CA. We pride ourselves on procuring and servicing parts locally. In 2007 we developed the worlds very first portable downhole camera, the R-CAM 1000. The R-CAM system took the large, expensive camera system and miniaturized the technology to make it a fraction of the cost and easier to use. That camera thrusted the portable system market forward and continues to be the leading portable camera today.

On the other side of things, we have chemicals that treat iron bacteria buildup, mineral scaling, and manganese. We would often receive videos and pictures of things downhole and people said 'What is that?', when referring to biofouling or scaling, and at the time we had no idea. So, we delved into finding out what it was for our customers, and that's when we started selling Boresaver. It was an easy to use and safe solution for these issues our customers were seeing. We continue to be the sole manufacturers in North America, so we're able to provide the quality expertise customers need.

How many employees did the company start with? How many do they have today?

We started with 5 employees either selling or making cameras back at Claude Laval Corp. Since Mr. Jones took over, the company has expanded to over a dozen people and we've moved to a separate 10,000 sq. ft facility where our sole job is to manufacture the best quality downhole cameras.

What is your biggest accomplishment or success working in the industry?

At the risk of sounding too cheesy, everyday that a customer calls me to tell me how great their camera works or about the amazing results they've seen with a Boresaver application is a successful day. It's one thing to just sell a product, but it's another to sell the best product on the market that helps contractors' clean water properly. Aside from that, being able to speak at conventions and host seminars on well rehabilitation or downhole camera usage makes me proud of the company I work for. Any successes I've had in this industry is a direct result of those I have worked for all of these years, and the continual knowledge I gain from talking to customers.

What do you think the biggest challenge is to the industry?

Pushing past the boundaries of 'it's always been done this way' is the most difficult thing for us to address. There's definitely something to keeping things simple and traditional, but when it comes to groundwater, change should be viewed as good and healthy. As with most other vendors we talk to, educating customers about new technologies and different perspectives can be difficult to do. There are new technologies and

ideas out there that don't get elevated or put into practice because they are considered change, and change takes time and money to invest in. We see this when a customer is hesitant to purchase a camera at first, but ends up making it an integral part of their company, they wondered how they did things before. But it takes that first investment and some courage to see beyond the past, into the future.

Why should others become involved in FGWA?

Florida Ground Water Association has provided LUS with a platform to share and connect with customers all over the southeast of the U.S.. From a manufacturer's perspective, this is one of, if not the best, association we are a part of. FGWA enables us to connect with a wide variety of distributors, customers, and manufacturers. This helps us grow not just as a company, but as professionals.

Any personal stories/hobbies/interests that you would like to share?

Truthfully, I'm not much of a hobby person, but I am someone who takes

relaxation very seriously. After shows or travel days, you'll almost always find me winding down with a glass of wine somewhere. Within the next few years, I'm planning some larger vacation trips where I plan on doing nothing but drinking cocktails by the water. I'm also a big cookie connoisseur, so if anyone has delicious recipes, I'm always happy to taste test.

Why is FGWA membership important to you?

One of the things I like about FGWA is the annual tradeshow because I get to connect directly with end users. Throughout the conversation, I always end up learning something from the

customer. I feel that this is a direct result of the association garnering attendance and providing a comfortable, yet professional community setting. Talking directly to our customers is a key piece in manufacturing, because these are the ones using the equipment and tell us what works and what doesn't. If I wasn't able to get in front of so many customers, I don't believe we would have the same high-quality products that we do. Customer feedback makes all the difference, and we're proud to be a part of FGWA to receive that.



OWNER OF LAVAL UNDERGROUND SURVEYS: GARRETT JONES
YEAR ESTABLISHED: 1940