

SPRING 2024

Inside THE Diamond

AMEREX

*Innovation
through
Automation*

page 4

Quality is Behind the Diamond®



A Letter from Harrison Bishop

In May of 1977, Jeff Layfield started what he assumed was simply a summer job at Amerex. Jimmy Carter was President, gasoline cost 62 cents per gallon and the original Star Wars movie premiered that year. Just as so many other things have progressed since then, so did Jeff's career with Amerex. He began as a second-shift assembly line worker in the Dry Chemical department to earn some extra money going into his senior year of high school; he is now retiring—ending his 47-year-long career with Amerex—as Senior Production Manager.

When Jeff started, only Buildings 1 and 2 of our plant were in use, while Buildings 3 and 4, and the first phase of the front office, were under construction. Our latest addition is Building 18. One piece of

(page 4). While change and growth are inevitable, some things—like leading the industry through our commitment to quality—will always remain the same.

Jeff has announced his plans for retirement in May 2024 (page 12). The news is, of course, bittersweet for the Amerex team as Jeff will be greatly missed. Throughout his time here, millions of products have been produced, protecting untold millions of people. His impact on our company and our industry cannot be overstated. Please join us in congratulating Jeff.

In addition to celebrating Jeff, we recognize new career growth opportunities for a few of our other team members in this issue. Jamie Knowles is carving out a new role as Industry Relations Manager (page 17). Learn what Jacob Johnsey,



Harrison Bishop
PRESIDENT AND CEO

Sales Operations Manager (page 15), and Brannon Paulk, who is Regional Sales Manager working with Craig Moreth in the North Central Region (page 15).

We have an exciting year ahead. National Association of Fire Equipment Distributors (NAFED) conferences will be here soon. Be on the lookout for email updates and stay tuned to our social media accounts for more information about our NAFED booth and special events. This and other conferences and events (page 19) are always a great opportunity to visit with our distributors, meet people we work with face-to-face, and hear directly about their challenges and successes. Special thanks to Jorgensen Company (page 8) and MECI (page 7) for sharing more about their businesses with us.

We hope you enjoy this issue of Inside the Diamond. 🌸

“ ... some things—like leading the industry through our commitment to quality—will always remain the same. ”

original machinery Jeff remembers fondly was initially employed to punch out artillery shells during WWII before it was used to make 10-pound shells for the Model 421 at Amerex. Automation, box machines, lifting tools and other production techniques have changed the way we operate. We continue to embrace and invest in new technology, like our two new robots on the fire extinguisher line

who has spent the past few years enhancing our Kitchen Protection Products, is looking forward to in his new role as Product Director—Systems (page 16). We're also excited to share that Riley-Kate Justice and Mexi Greene have expanded their responsibilities in our Customer Success department (page 18). In addition, we take a moment to introduce you to Kim McGuire, who joins the team as

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New Sales Operations Manager Kim McGuire's first day on the job involved a video shoot in the fire test building. Read more about Kim on page 15.

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HostMilano International Hospitality Trade Show

In October of 2023, Amerex team members traveled to Milan, Italy, for HostMilano, a global exhibition dedicated to the catering and hospitality sector. It was great to connect with professionals of our industry from all over the world to share ideas and showcase all the features of the Amerex Kitchen Protection System.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Steve Wilkinson, Mark Fenton, Jacob Johnsey and Chris Nichols.

AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition

This fall the Amerex team attended the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) annual meeting and exposition in Washington, D.C., as a National Partner exhibitor. Our team had the opportunity to explore ongoing projects and potential new ones with key contacts in the 300,000-square-foot exhibit hall.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Chris Nichols, Nick Denton, Susan Ray, Ben Pitts, Ken Mier, and Nolan Hoffman.

Amerex Manufacturing Automation

We have added two new robots to the fire extinguisher line. This investment in automation has allowed us to better serve both our team members and customers.

Jay Ghelani, Vice President–Operations, explains our mindset on continuous improvement and how these robots have improved ergonomics and increased our capacity in our new video: <https://bit.ly/amxauto>.



Keep It Clean Challenge

Congratulations to Billy Stephenson, Deven McIntyre, Clifton Tidmore, Kent Reid, Mitchell Vance, Antonio Marshall, Diane McGee, Michelle Putnam and Chuck Freind for winning third place in the McWane “Keep it Clean Challenge.” Their forward-thinking repackaging idea replaced cardboard boxes with totes already on hand in the facility.



Amerex Hosts National Air Guard



Members of the 117th Air Refueling Wing recently visited Amerex for a facilities tour. The group was welcomed by Harrison Bishop, who shared a company overview, Ken Mier, who provided background on Amerex’s Defense Division, and Jay Ghelani, who showed them around the plant.

APTA Conference and Expo With Transit Marketing Group

Transit Marketing Group (TMG) celebrated their 30th anniversary in October at the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Conference and Expo held in Orlando. The Amerex team joined the TMG booth to showcase some of our newest products, including the EV Gas Detection System and AVTplus.



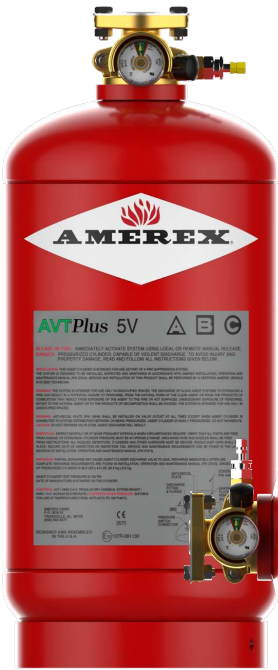
LEFT TO RIGHT: Bill Jolbert, Alan Fulton, Nancy Heard, and Rob Ross.

End-of-the-Year Training in Trussville



ABOVE: David Rice.

More than 50 people attended David Rice’s end-of-the year KP/IS and VS training in Trussville. One highlight of the Trussville training is the factory tour at Amerex headquarters. See page 19 for a list of 2024 training classes and other events. 🍷




AVT™ Plus

AVT™ Plus was designed to quickly knock down the fire while protecting the sensitive components of your vehicle. Initially approved for the transit industry, the innovative Amerex engineers designed this clean agent system to leave behind no residue with a low Global Warming Potential (GWP) and a very low Ozone Depletion Potential (ODP). Backed by extensive research and testing, Amerex has set the standard for clean agent protection for commercial vehicles.



10-lb. Z-Series

The Z-Series High Performance extinguisher now comes in a 10-lb. unit. This new fire extinguisher has all the features of our Z-Series unit and meets the minimum rating in a smaller size. With our exclusive Amerex paint process, fewer moving parts, and simple design, this extinguisher provides ultimate corrosion resistance, plus minimal repair and maintenance costs over time. The Z-Series is recommended for use on sites where heavy industrial, manufacturing, mining, processing facilities, and anywhere chemical- or corrosive-intensive work takes place or an elevated fire risk exists. *(Rendering not yet final.)* 



HT Series

The HT Series is the clean and powerful fire protection solution for clean and highly technical commercial and industrial environments. This new product can safely put out fires without damaging electronic equipment, specialized machinery, or other delicate materials. That also means that there is no cleanup or downtime for your operations. Industries such as health care, clean manufacturing, data processing centers, and museums would all benefit from the HT Series. This fire extinguisher is also sensitive to the environment, meeting strict environmental regulations for Global Warming Potential (GWP) and Ozone Depletion Potential (ODP). With knock-down power and firefighting efficiency, the HT Series using Halotron BrX agent features a steel cylinder, durable high-gloss polyester powder paint, and all-metal valve construction. Maximum visibility during discharge, a large stainless steel pull pin, and no electronic conductivity back to the user make this extinguisher extremely easy to use.

MECI Celebrates Long History

In 1994, Amerex began its long relationship with MERCANTIL DE EQUIPOS CONTRA INCENDIO (MECI) in Mexico City, Mexico. The origin of MECI goes back to 1994, starting as part of a partnership with the companies “GARYR” from Monterrey, Nuevo Leon (Mexico) and “TEXAS FIRE EXTINGUISHERS INC. of Dallas, Texas (USA) selling Amerex fire extinguishers. The 3 companies worked together, with the Dallas company directing the activities as part of Amerex’ domestic USA sales area.

In 1997 a new partnership was formed to create a new company more focused on Amerex in Mexico, known as “Amerex Mexico Corporation.” This was part of the Amerex Corporation and was located in Nuevo Leon. In June of 1999, the partnership was formalized to include Joe McCormick of TEXAS FIRE and Jose Luis Loaiza T. of GARYR, and CORPORACION AMEREX MEXICO, S.A. de C.V. was created to promote the distribution of the

Amerex brand all over Mexico. Since then, the company has promoted and distributed all the equipment manufactured by Amerex.

In 2000 Jose became the sole owner of the company and ran it until 2015 when his son Jose Luis Loaiza took over the business. In October 2016, Jose sold his company GARYR in Monterrey, which was primarily engaged in maintenance services and the recharging of portable fire extinguishers and fire systems. In 2017, Jose Luis decided to continue the portfolio of services of that his father’s company (GARYR) formerly did, and he started the operations a new company, MECI (www.meci.mx) MERCANTIL DE EQUIPOS CONTRA INCENDIO.

MECI’s main purpose is the providing of maintenance services, recharging and installations of fire systems, and as the family always has, representing and promoting Amerex in the Mexican market.

All of us at Amerex thank Jose, Jose Luis and the rest of the MECI



family for their long dedication to promoting the Amerex family of products all over Mexico. From our Amerex Family to yours, we congratulate the MECI family on the first 30 years of business together and we look forward to what the next 30 years together will bring! 



Jorgensen Company Builds Upon Its Legacy of Quality and Commitment to California's Central Valley

In 1932, Hans Jorgensen, an auto mechanic in Fresno, California, was approached by the local fire marshal to see if he and his shop would take on the role of refilling fire extinguishers in their community. He seized the opportunity, laying the foundation for what is now the employee-owned company Jorgensen and Sons, Inc., or Jorgensen Company.

What started as a humble endeavor has blossomed into a reputable name in fire safety, with seven locations across California's Central Valley and a dedicated team of approximately 145 employees.

"Not many companies provide all the services we do, so we are looking forward to having our new location in Stockton, which just opened at the beginning of this year, and our continued growth to better support the people and businesses in our region," says Lisa Bissett, President and CEO of Jorgensen Co.

Jorgensen Co.'s Integrated Fire Protection program is an integral piece of the company's service offerings, designed to cater to the needs of large single- or multi-location companies. This program simplifies fire protection management by consolidating all services under one vendor, offering a transparent pricing structure and ensuring regular invoicing. Streamlining the approach enhances operational efficiency and fosters reliability and trust.

While the distributor supports warehouses, oil refineries, manufacturing, municipalities, retail, private businesses, and the food and restaurant industries, Lisa says agriculture and education stand as pillars—noting that the Central Valley provides nearly 40% of the world's fruit and nut supply. Jorgensen Company plays a crucial role in safeguarding it.

“ We can feel the pride Amerex takes in everything they do, and when it's that real, it feels special to be a part of it. ”

A cornerstone of Jorgensen Company's success is its longstanding partnership with Amerex, spanning over three decades. "We appreciate that it's not just the products at Amerex that are high quality," says Lisa. "It's also the people and the great customer service they provide."

Lisa fondly recalls interactions with Harrison Bishop, Ben Pitts and Garth Embree, their Amerex representative, highlighting their genuine interest in the company's well-being and their commitment to collaboration. This deep-seated relationship extends beyond mere transactions;





ABOVE: John Huffman, Garth Embree, and Lisa Bissett.

it's a testament to the shared values of quality, integrity and customer satisfaction. "We can feel the pride Amerex takes in everything they do, and when it's that real, it feels special to be a part of it," says Lisa.

"We had a fantastic year in 2023, the best one we've had yet," she says. With it being her first year as President and CEO, taking the reins from Darrell Hefley, her predecessor who worked for Jorgensen for 52 years, she is focusing on continuing upon that longstanding success. With trusted allies like Amerex, recent additions to their service portfolio and plans to broaden their footprint in their current regions, Jorgensen Company is well positioned for growth. Amerex is proud to be a strong partner and support them as they evolve and exemplify their unwavering dedication to innovation, service and community. 🌸

JORGENSEN COMPANY PROVIDES

Installation, service, and repair of: portable fire extinguishers, fire sprinklers, fire alarm, fire pump, backflow preventer, gas detection, restaurant and kitchen suppression systems, CO2 and clean agent fire suppression systems, safety supplies, and safety training.



ABOVE: Heirloom—a Jorgensen install in Fresno, California.

Fire Prevention

ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES



LEFT TO RIGHT: Jeff Work, the Assistant UD Fire Marshal, and Kevin McSweeney, UD Fire Marshal.



Amerex proudly sponsors the Center for Campus Fire Safety in their efforts to protect higher education institutions.

Protecting a college campus from fire hazards is like safeguarding an entire community, with varied environments that require specific forms of prevention and protection. The potential risks are extremely different in the research and technology labs from the libraries and residence halls. “Amerex is proud to sponsor the Center for Campus Fire Safety (CCFS), demonstrating a commitment to advancing fire safety measures within the academic sphere,” says Susan Ray, Marketing Director. “CCFS allows campus fire safety leaders from around the country to connect and solve the specific fire-related issues facing the life and property they work diligently to protect.”

Kevin McSweeney, Campus Fire Marshal at the University of Delaware and CCFS Director, says the biggest challenges he faces in his line of work are the unpredictable behavior in residence halls and high-risk lab experiments led by lab researchers.

In his responsibilities overseeing all fire and life safety programs for the university, he’s responsible for 400 buildings at five university locations across the state. The main campus in Newark has a population of roughly 38,000 people, including students, faculty and staff. Employing over 5,000 fire extinguishers across campus facilities, the University of Delaware exclusively relies on Amerex products for its fire protection needs.

“I continue to back the vendors and manufacturers who serve our campus well,” Kevin says. “The Amerex brand is highly reliable, and the costs are within reason to maintain. We primarily use 10-lb. ABC Dry Chemical on campus, but we have K-class in our dining halls, Halotron or CO2 in high-value electrical equipment spaces, and composite H2O in MRIs and magnet halls.”

Justin Daniels, President of CCFS, finds college campuses are also challenged by one of the biggest and most widely experienced fire safety hazards—lithium-ion batteries. “Higher education campuses are in a unique position because we’ve been dealing with them for what seems like a lot longer due to our research,” he says. An interesting challenge now, Justin says, is that students ride scooters back and forth to class more frequently.

Some students who live in residence halls are even charging scooters from transportation companies in their rooms as a way to earn income. Charging these devices in residence halls can be a major safety risk, and

students making choices like this—without considering their well-being and the danger in which they’re putting others—is what keeps Justin and other fire safety professionals on college campuses up at night. While many schools have banned scooters because of these risks, they are everywhere and difficult to police.

Another challenge that isn’t necessarily unique to college campuses is how to properly prepare and protect parking garages. “No matter where you put the cabinets, people will inevitably hit them with their cars,” Justin says. “Strategically placing them in a parking garage is key to making sure they’re in useful locations and easy to find.” Destruction and fire extinguisher theft cost college campuses time and money.

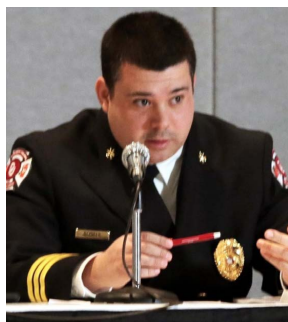
Overall, Justin believes higher education institutions are doing a great job with fire extinguisher use. “Universities are some of the only places in the country enforcing the monthly extinguisher checks required by NFPA10,” he says. “Thousands of students and employees are being trained annually on the use of extinguishers and to ensure the proper extinguisher types and protocols are followed.”

At the University of Delaware, Kevin says the custodial staff has been trained to do the monthly inspections and provide reports to his team. Every August his department teaches resident assistants how to be prepared for potential fire situations in their buildings, including fire extinguisher training. The university also has extensive online and in-person training resources.

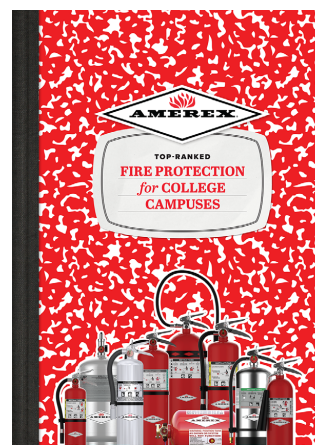
The commitment and diligence are paying off—earlier this school year, a student resident confidently put out a stovetop fire with an Amerex extinguisher available in the building. “The university is our town,” says Kevin. “Every area is important, and we want to be sure to keep everyone safe.”

The partnership between Amerex and CCFS underscores a shared commitment to enhancing fire safety protocols on college campuses. Through collaborative endeavors and proactive measures, higher education institutions can easily foster a culture of safety and preparedness, ensuring the well-being of their campus communities.

Learn more by downloading the new college hazards brochure, or visit MyCCFS.org to learn more about CCFS. 🌟



ABOVE: Justin Daniels.



A man with short brown hair, smiling, stands in front of a modern building with large glass windows. The building has the Amerex logo and name on it. The man is wearing a grey jacket with the Amerex logo on the chest. The text 'Celebrating 47 Years' is overlaid on the image in a large, white, serif font.

Celebrating 47 Years

**JEFF LAYFIELD, SENIOR PRODUCTION
MANAGER, LOOKS BACK
AS HE PREPARES FOR RETIREMENT
FROM AMEREX.**

AS THE SUMMER OF 1977 WAS APPROACHING, JEFF LAYFIELD KNEW HE WOULD NEED SOME GAS MONEY TO GET THROUGH HIS SENIOR YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL. HE TOOK A JOB ON THE POWDER EXTINGUISHER LINE AT AMEREX, PACKING OUT 10-LB. FIRE EXTINGUISHERS.

“When that summer ended, I turned in my notice because I had after-school marching band practice,” Jeff says. “My supervisor talked me into staying to work part time on second shift. I came in after practice and worked until 11:30 every night.” Some mornings, he admits, he didn’t want to get up for school.

Jeff was already celebrating his one-year anniversary with Amerex around the same time as graduating high school. He thought about quitting, but his mom talked him out of it—47 years later, he’s still here. “I thought ‘If I’m going to be doing something the rest of my life, I could be doing it here,’” he says. “I had decided I really enjoyed working at Amerex. I liked working with the people and the equipment.”

Jeff was quickly promoted to second-shift coordinator. He said he would challenge his second-shift team to run more extinguishers than first shift every day. They did it every time. His motivation and the support he showed his team were likely why he was promoted again to a supervisor role in 1980. The company was growing quickly, which opened doors and allowed him to take on new opportunities throughout his career at Amerex.

Every time he was promoted, he strived to get to the next level. In 1987, Jeff’s supervisors took notice of his drive and moved him around to different departments—including those that were not doing as well—to see how he would perform and how he would work with the teams in each of those areas. He has held a supervisory role in nearly every department, including powder, steel, welding, valve assembly and stainless. He moved into a production manager role in the 1990s, and now he’s currently serving as Senior Production Manager.

His secret to success: When you tell someone you’re going to work, you always give them 110%.

“Jeff will be greatly missed by the Amerex community,” says Harrison Bishop, President and CEO. “His impact on this company and its team members cannot be overstated. And neither can the fact that he’s been a part of protecting millions of people’s lives by helping to produce such a high volume of quality products throughout his longstanding career.”

With his tenure, Jeff has seen a lot of change at Amerex through the years and has been a part of

countless pivotal moments in our company’s history. “I remember one of our first pieces of automation was a simple machine with an arm that had a drag and drop part,” he says. “It was picking it up and blowing chips out of it. Everyone thought that was so cool and named the machine Robbie the Robot.” Automation has continued to be an integral part of our production, allowing for more efficient growth—and we still name the robots that are a part of our teams!

One thing hasn’t changed through the years, and that’s the team’s ability to come together to make things happen for the Amerex customer. Jeff is proud to be a part of a company that makes the customer a priority, and that when a customer needs something, Amerex always responds as swiftly and effectively as possible. He says he could recount hundreds of times throughout his career when Amerex has jumped through elaborate hoops to do whatever is possible for our customers.

“ I thought ‘If I’m going to be doing something the rest of my life, I could be doing it here.’ ”

Commitment to quality is another factor that has remained the same with Amerex. Being on the lines of Amerex’s well-engineered products, Jeff has seen the care, expertise, and excellence built into whatever is behind the diamond. With quality assurances through every step of the production process, everyone involved knows that what Amerex delivers to its distributors and what ultimately is put in place to protect our communities meets the highest standards in the industry.

Above all else, the people he’s worked with have made this lifelong career a success for Jeff. He considers his Amerex team his second family. “I have always had the best people around me,” Jeff says. “Surrounding myself with successful people has



“ I have always had the best people around me ... ”

of Operations. “He leaves us with a lasting legacy through all of the individuals he has trained and mentored over his 47 years with Amerex. He has made sure the organization will remain in capable hands on his last day. He will be dearly missed.”

Jeff has been here a long time, and he admits that life without Amerex as a part of his day-to-day will feel drastically different. He knows that he and his wife will make the most of it, and they’re looking forward to a camping-style road trip up to Michigan this summer. You’ll see Jeff around our campus until May, but after that, you’ll have to find him at home, where he’ll be doing odd jobs and finding new ways to spend his days.

We appreciate Jeff’s commitment to Amerex and the life he dedicated to our company. Please join us in congratulating him on his retirement. Jeff, we look forward to seeing what you bring into the next era of your life—thank you for your service. 🌸

always been the key to my success. The more I learn, the more I teach them, the more opportunities arise for all of us.”

Jeff knows the future of Amerex is bright. The company continues to evolve and innovate and bring people together who will bring in new ideas and produce the best products to meet the changing needs of the industry.

“I’m extremely happy for Jeff to be able to start the next chapter of his life,” says Jay Ghelani, Vice President



Kim McGuire Joins Amerex as Sales Operations Manager

In the dynamic world of sales and operations, where strategy meets execution and leadership is paramount, Kim McGuire's background sets her up to take on the opportunities the new role of Sales Operations Manager will undoubtedly provide.

"In this newly created role, Kim will focus on sales productivity and process improvement for the sales team in order to build upon our strong distributor partnerships," says Ben Pitts, Vice President - Sales and Marketing. "Kim's energy and experience make her a great fit for this position and for Amerex overall."

While the companies Kim has worked for in the past are varied in industry, there are three key skills Kim has strengthened throughout her career that will play a key role in her work at Amerex: open communication, a competitive spirit and a voracious appetite for learning.

Kim graduated from Troy University with a bachelor's in broadcast journalism and advertising and started her career with the Birmingham Airport Authority.

She went on to serve in account management, customer service and order processing roles. Most recently, she served as Vice President of Administration with BCR Wealth Strategies. Throughout these experiences, she appreciated the ability to work cross-departmentally to get something great done on a fast-paced deadline. Kim has often found herself in the position of a connector between teams and an overseer of keeping things moving through efficient and effective internal processes—and that's where she likes to live, in the middle of it all, where nothing becomes repetitive and there are always new things to learn. The experience of gaining the N.A.C.S Women's Leadership Program certificate from Yale School of Management and recently graduating with her master's degree in strategic management from Penn State University are other ways she's extended her commitment to understanding department nuances and how to effectively bring people together around a goal.

As Kim looks to her future with Amerex, she's excited to bring her love of taking on a challenge and competitive nature to the role. "One thing I've discovered about myself is how much I love to evaluate what we are currently doing and how can we continue to evolve and become even better, faster, stronger," she says.

Kim's also excited to see and share the stories the data is telling, a critical component of her work when she served as the Director of Franchise Services with Chester's International—the stories about where the gaps are, where to put more focus and the lessons from the past that can take Amerex into an even stronger future.

Welcome, Brannon Paulk



The Amerex team welcomes our new North Central Regional Sales Manager Brannon Paulk. Brannon joined Amerex in January and will join Craig Moreth in working one-on-one with customers and distributors in Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Ohio, Nebraska, Wisconsin, northern Michigan, Minnesota, and North and South Dakota. He looks forward to learning from Craig as an industry veteran.

"Brannon has a depth of sales experience with a focus on partnering with his customers," says Ben Pitts, Vice President - Sales and Marketing. "I am confident that Brannon will be a high impact player for Amerex."

The history and reputation of Amerex is one of the many things that drew Brannon to the position. "Amerex is the leading manufacturer of fire extinguishers," says Brannon. "And I want to be part of a company that leads the world in the product that they manufacture."

Originally from Birmingham, Alabama, Brannon began his career with Royal Cup Coffee after graduating from the University of Alabama. He spent five years in sales with the company, eventually moving to New Orleans, Louisiana. After that he took a sales position with Gordon Food Service and then Proctor U in Chicago. He loves working in sales because he enjoys working with people and meeting new people.

One of Brannon's favorite things about living in Chicago is the sports scene and having any sporting event at your fingertips. He also enjoys the city's food scene. Brannon loves the cold weather in Chicago and

loves that it is cold seven to eight months out of the year, as compared to Alabama where it is hot seven to eight months out of the year.

Outside of work, one of Brannon’s favorite hobbies is reading nonfiction books. He enjoys visiting his family in Alabama, which includes his parents and sister and her two children. Brannon’s 11-year-old nephew is a talented football player, and he likes to attend his games when he gets a chance.

A Path to Product Director



Jacob Johnsey was recently promoted to Product Director, overseeing the kitchen, industrial and vehicle systems for Amerex. “Combining the Amerex restaurant and industrial and vehicle systems product management teams to form one fire suppression group provides the potential for significant growth,” says Ben Pitts, Vice

President—Sales and Marketing. “Amerex will continue to tailor its products and programs to the needs of these three distinct fire suppression markets—food service, vehicles, and industrial. Alan Fulton has led the vehicles group to great growth this year and will continue as Product Manager of the division reporting to Jacob.”

Jacob started his Amerex career in April 2015 as a Product Development Engineer within our military and defense group. He worked on design and product certification to military specification requirements for the U.S. military, as well as other foreign military groups, based around fire and life safety equipment—primarily explosion suppression equipment, ground tactical vehicles and third-party environmental testing for a program we had with the U.S. Department of Defense.

After nearly four years, he transitioned to Engineering Compliance Manager, where he was responsible for managing all the certifications and approvals our products hold—both for domestic and international markets—coordinating with agencies to certify our product would meet their requirements. He was then able to serve in his

most recent role as Product Manager for our kitchen and industrial systems.

When asked what originally drew him to Amerex, Jacob says he knew of Amerex growing up and that it was a big company based here in Birmingham. “I even remember my dad having a 5-lb. ABC Amerex extinguisher hanging in our basement,” Jacob says. “I’ve lived in Birmingham most of my life, and I wanted to find a strong company in the area that would enable me to have a career path within the same organization.” As a Mechanical Engineer, having the opportunity to work on product design for a military-type environment was exciting. He had a feeling being in that role would push him to be a better engineer, and it did. It broadened his viewpoint on how to design and how to work with customers.

Jacob is most excited about developing a more long-term strategy around how Amerex approaches systems solutions for our customers in this new role. The types of fire hazards and environments in which those occur change and vary a lot, which will push our engineering and sales team to be creative in how we come up with solutions specific to those industries while also trying to diversify and build continuity across the board.

In our vehicle systems group, Jacob sees a lot of change surrounding electric vehicles. In response, Amerex developed an early warning gas detection system this past year, and we’re partnering with some bus OEMs in the U.S. market to implement that into different municipal bus fleets.

The commercial kitchen space—a very traditional hazardous environment that’s existed for a long time—is getting more attention globally with more requirements and specifications. While those are already strong in the U.S., Jacob sees potential for development in other parts of the world. Amerex plans to bring those burgeoning markets into the future of fire protection.

Jamie Knowles Named New Industry Relations Manager



Jamie Knowles has recently stepped into a new position: Industry Relations Manager. He says there are three main objectives of the job: *lead, promote and protect*. While these apply to Amerex Corporation, this collaborative position extends the company's legacy of carrying out these objectives for the entire fire

extinguisher and pre-engineered fire system industry. "Jamie is a great fit for this new role where he will develop and grow strategic partnerships with a diverse range of internal and external stakeholders to solidify Amerex as the fire protection industry leader, enhance the Amerex brand and expand our market reach," says Ben Pitts, Vice President—Sales and Marketing.

LEAD Jamie's vision for leading the industry revolves around representing Amerex as a front-runner in fire protection. He actively participates in educational seminars, trade associations like NAFED and NFPA, and serves on fire code committees, including the NFPA 10 Committee.

Leading goes beyond product representation; Jamie aims to inspire and mentor young technicians, recognizing the importance of nurturing the next generation in the industry. Jamie initiated a study group to cross-train and elevate the expertise within Amerex. "Continuing education, searching for more information and always striving to be the most informed is essential in helping our distributors do everything they can to protect life and property," Jamie says. By fostering a culture of knowledge-sharing and professional development, he aims to empower individuals to excel in their roles and contribute to the industry's overall growth.

PROMOTE As Jamie continues to promote Amerex as the leader within the fire extinguisher and pre-

engineered fire systems industry, he will also be promoting the distributors and OEMs that facilitate the installation, inspection testing and maintenance of these products. Helping end users understand the value these products provide and how they fit into any fire protection plan paves the way for these critical products to be selected and used in the proper places.

"I like my presentations to be thought-provoking. If I am writing for an association publication or presenting in person, my objective is to get the audience to think deeply about the subject and ask themselves hard questions about how they are doing business," he says. "I always strive to educate and motivate while identifying new market opportunities for Amerex products."

PROTECT Protecting the integrity of the industry is paramount to Jamie. "If you've heard one thing about me, it's probably that I care greatly about the fire protection industry," he says. Through this role, he'll continue to ensure fire extinguishers and pre-engineered fire systems remain a vital component of fire codes and regulations, advocating against any measures that might compromise their efficacy. He says protecting the technicians and their work is an essential part of that.

Jamie's collaborative approach involves liaising with various stakeholders, including fire marshals, fire equipment distributors, code officials, third-party testing agencies, OEMs and end users. These individuals all have a part to play in protecting the integrity of the industry.

Jamie's passion for fire protection extends beyond his role at Amerex. He envisions a future where the industry thrives, driven by innovation and a commitment to safeguarding lives and property. By instilling this vision in his work, Jamie hopes to inspire others to embrace the values of excellence and dedication that define the fire protection profession. "If I can take what I've learned and make myself, other people and our industry better—and protect life and safety in just incrementally better ways—then I've done my job," Jamie says. "If I can positively affect the entire industry, it's always good for Amerex."

Join us in welcoming Jamie Knowles to his new role, where his expertise and passion will undoubtedly make a significant impact on the industry and the community we serve. Stay tuned as Jamie continues to lead, promote and protect the future of fire protection at Amerex.

Exciting Structure Changes to Customer Success

CHERYL HANNUM, Sales and Customer Support Director, recently announced some exciting leadership changes in the Customer Success department.

“The Customer Success team has great opportunities in 2024 to continue to set Amerex apart from our competition in providing an excellent customer experience,” she says.



RILEY-KATE JUSTICE has taken on an enhanced leadership role within the Customer Success department as Customer Engagement Specialist. In her new role, her main focus will be to improve our customer experience. She will be focused on continuing to build strong relationships with our customers, doing research to better understand their needs,

and updating our internal processes to better serve our customers and provide them with solutions.

“Riley-Kate has an excellent track record in the development and growth of our team with technology, processes, and training programs,” says Cheryl. “She will continue to do this, and will now have the ability to identify trends and devise strategies to drive customer engagement and retention through industry research, customer and trade show interactions, and new technology needed for a next-generation customer experience.”

Riley-Kate states that we are fortunate to have the best customers in the fire suppression industry. She enjoys the opportunity to work with our customers to engage with different perspectives and identify unique challenges, then ultimately collaborate to find tailored solutions that positively impact their experience with Amerex.

What Riley-Kate loves most about Amerex is the sense of pride and purpose that comes with knowing we’re making life-saving products. “It’s truly a privilege to be part of a company that’s so dedicated to its mission and takes immense pride in its work,” she says. “Working alongside such incredible people who share the same passion is inspiring, and the opportunity to learn and grow together every day is something I cherish.”

Outside of work, Riley-Kate enjoys exploring U.S.

national parks! She has been to nine parks so far, some of those including Denali and Glacier Bay National Parks in Alaska, Glacier National Park in Montana, and Crater Lake National Park in Oregon. This year she plans to check three more off the list!



MEXI GREEN has been named Customer Success Team Leader. In this new position, she will provide direction and support for all Customer Success Representatives and continue her work in supporting our customers. Mexi started her career at Amerex nearly four years ago as a Customer Success Representative.

“Mexi is a true example of ‘Customer Success is not a department; it is a mindset,’” says Cheryl. “Her many years of experience in customer service and professionalism are great assets to Amerex and our team. She has already set some impressive goals for herself and the team for 2024, and I am sure she will be successful.”

Mexi enjoys taking care of our customer needs. If a customer has an issue, Mexi takes it personally. She always wants to leave a customer in a better situation than when they first called. Her favorite part about working at Amerex is the friendly atmosphere. People are always smiling and waving at you, which does not always happen in other places.

“I’m so excited for this new role,” she says. “We have such a great team within this department. We work well together, and it is a joy to come to work every day.”

Outside of work Mexi enjoys spending time with her family. She and her husband like to take walks outside and explore new places with their Dutch Shepherd who is full of energy. Her son is a senior in high school so she is taking in all of his “lasts.” Her son had a shoulder surgery in December so he has been out of basketball season since then. He will get to play baseball at the end of the month so she looks forward to spending her spring at the baseball field. 🌸

events 2024



EVENT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	DATES
KP/IS Training	Las Vegas, NV	March 4–5
VS Training	Las Vegas, NV	March 6
NAFED	Las Vegas, NV	March 7
GAFSED	Jekyll Island, GA	March 20–22
KP/IS Training	Dedham, MA	March 26–27
NAFED	Atlantic City, NJ	April 11
KP/IS Training	Atlanta, GA	April 16–17
VS Training	Atlanta, GA	April 18
Waste Expo	Las Vegas, NV	May 7–9
KP/IS Training	Chicago, IL	May 14–15
VS Training	Chicago, IL	May 16
ORFED	Salem, OR	May 18
NAFED	New Orleans, LA	May 23
STNEXPO	Indianapolis, IN	May 31–June 4
KP/IS Training	Lexington, KY	June 11–12
NFPA	Orlando, FL	June 17–19
GAPT	Jekyll Island, GA	June 19
FFEDA Annual Conference	Orlando, FL	June 21–23
STNEXPO	Reno, NV	July 12–17
KP/IS Training	Tacoma, WA	July 23–24
MINExpo	Las Vegas, NV	Sept. 24–26
KP/IS Training	Allentown, PA	Oct. 1–2
VS Training	Allentown, PA	Oct. 3
TSD Conference	Frisco, TX	Nov. 15–16

why AMEREX?

QUALITY

Amerex didn't become a global market leader overnight.

Our business has grown year after year based on our products' reputation for performance and durability in even the most rugged environments.

INNOVATION

Because Amerex is independently owned and forward thinking, we are continuously innovating and investing for the benefit of our customers and those they serve.

SERVICE

Amerex was founded on a mutual appreciation for premium quality in products and customer service and the importance of interpersonal relations.



Quality is Behind the Diamond®

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