

FALL 2024



Diamond



BLAZING
A TRAIL

**AMEREX DISTRIBUTORS AND
FIREFIGHTING PROFESSIONALS**

Quality is Behind the Diamond®



A Letter from Harrison Bishop

Anyone in our industry will admit that it is hard to go anywhere without noticing fire extinguishers. The love and pride we have in the work we do must be apparent; otherwise, our family and friends wouldn't send us photos of the Amerex Diamonds they find when they are out at a favorite restaurant, their local grocery store or on a vacation exploring somewhere new.

That is exactly what Mike Powell's sister did this summer on her visit to Roanoke Island, NC, where she spotted an Amerex fire extinguisher inside the Elizabeth II, a representational ship based on the English merchant vessels from the Roanoke Voyage of 1585. Her photo inspired us to see if we could get in this habit of seeking out the Diamond catch on at a larger scale.

Hearing from you is important to us, and aside from the great photos, we also value hearing about your work, challenges and successes when we see you at events and trade shows. We hope you'll connect with us at one of the upcoming trade shows and training events we have listed on page 19.

If you attend an upcoming transit or kitchen systems training, you'll likely have the chance to learn from Joe Knighton, who joined our training team earlier this year (page 8). We also welcomed Mike Powell to the kitchen systems team. In addition to his responsibilities as National Sales Director, Mike will support kitchen systems sales—allowing our team to leverage his extensive industry and restaurant experience to expand potential growth opportunities for our



Harrison Bishop
PRESIDENT AND CEO

“ ... Amerex will always stand by your side to help safeguard what matters most. ”

During our “*Amerex Is Everywhere!*” contest, we asked you to send in your most unique Amerex fire extinguisher photos with the stories behind them—and submissions came in from around the world. We had such a positive response that narrowing down our favorite was difficult. You can see the top choices on page 18.

business partners (page 7).

With Jeff Layfield's retirement this past spring, you'll also see some familiar faces leading our production team (page 11). Mark Lewis and Alex Hydrick, who both have a longstanding tenure at Amerex and training under Jeff's leadership, have made it an easy transition by working closely together to ensure

our team continues on a successful path forward.

I'm writing this letter to you, our readers, on Sept. 11. In doing so, there really isn't a better story to highlight than the one on page 14, featuring a few of our distributors who also serve their communities as firefighters. We thank them, and every first responder, for their service.

As we continue to innovate and uphold our commitment to protecting people and property, know that Amerex will always stand by your side to help safeguard what matters most. Thank you for reading this issue of *Inside the Diamond*. 🌟

contents

FALL 2024



11

Looking ahead to the future of Amerex production with Mark Lewis and Alex Hydrick.

Industry News	4
Employee Spotlight	7
International Spotlight	9
New Leadership, Same Quality Behind the Diamond	11
Fighting Fire With Firefighters.....	14
Amerex Is Everywhere	18
Amerex 2024–2025 Events Calendar.....	19

Reflecting on NAFED 2024

We had another great year of NAFED Conference and Expo events. The Amerex team traveled to Las Vegas, Atlantic City, and New Orleans to attend because these events are always fantastic opportunities for us to meet with our partners in the industry. Thank you to everyone who visited the Amerex booths, where we shared information on a few of our new products—including the HT Series, the 10 lb. Z-Series and AVT plus—and where you shared your current challenges and successes. Hosting a cocktail hour at NAFED was also a great way for us to connect with business partners. It was wonderful to see so many women leaders in the industry attend our ladies cocktail hours and brunches. As we start planning for the 2025 NAFED shows, we are still feeling inspired by the Jazz Brunch in New Orleans. It was our highest attendance at an event like this yet! Thank you for all you do to support your sponsors and exhibitors, NAFED! See you next year!



BACK ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Connor Schleicher, Bobby Agee, Susan Ray, Brannon Paulk, Riley-Kate Justice, Joe Rost, Harrison Bishop, Gidget Yeager, Jeff Roeger, Jay Ghelani, Craig Moreth, Derek Bryant, Wade Tilley, Kim McGuire, Jamie Knowles, and Brayden Banks. FRONT ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Nancy Heard, Ben Pitts, Jacob Johnsey, Mike Powell, Chris Nichols, and Derek Wester.



Ladies Jazz Brunch in New Orleans.

Extreme Classroom Makeover

For the first time, Amerex held a contest for educators in area school systems to receive a monetary award to assist in a classroom makeover for the 2024–2025 school year. Teachers filled out an application where they shared information about how the award would be used in the classroom for the upcoming school year. The room makeover criteria included paint, carpet, tile, furniture and interior decorative items, or supplies not provided by the school. Entrants submitted “before” pictures and were requested to take the “after” photos. Winners were selected based on described work ethic, dedication to students and originality of teacher’s approach to educating.



THIS YEAR’S WINNERS WERE, LEFT TO RIGHT: Kelvin Jackson—8th grade teacher at Jones Valley Middle School, Tawana Lee Toles—9th-12th Self-Contained Special Education Unit at Springville High School, and Tracy Johns—6th-8th grade Special Education Self-Contained Life Skills teacher at Hewitt Trussville Middle School.

Amerex Team Travels to Orlando for NFPA Expo

In June, Amerex team members traveled to Orlando for the 2024 National Fire Protection Association Conference & Expo. This annual conference provides the opportunity for thousands of industry-leading professionals to learn, network, and exhibit products that protect us by meeting critical fire codes and standards.

This year's conference had 8,110 attendees from 63 countries and 55 U.S. states and provinces. Attendees represented a wide range of industries, including fire protection, fire service, consulting, contractor/installation, government and electrical.

"This year's conference was a great opportunity for our team to spend face-to-face time with customers and leaders in the industry to get a better understanding of their needs," says Ben Pitts, Vice President—Sales and Marketing. "It also provides a chance for our NFPA Committee members to spend time with other industry leaders and attend the various sessions."

Brayden Banks, Amerex Product Manager—Portable Fire Extinguishers, agrees and appreciated the incredible energy at this year's expo. "The conference provided a great chance for us to talk to other folks in fire protection. Those different

perspectives improve the quality of products and the entire industry."

At the Amerex booth, attendees learned more about the new 10 lb. Z-Series fire extinguisher and the new Halotron BrX extinguisher for commercial use known as the HT Series. Kendall Pate, Product Development Manager, gave demonstrations of the Amerex EV Gas Detection System. Jacob Johnsey, Product Director—Fire Suppression Systems, Jamie Knowles, Industry Relations Manager, and Brayden hosted a Facebook Live session from the Amerex booth each day.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Susan Ray, Jay Ghelani, Harrison Bishop, Kendall Pate, Mike Powell, Christian Groff, Jacob Johnsey, Ben Pitts, and Chris Nichols at NFPA in Orlando, Florida.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Jason Gregory, Jamie Knowles, Austin Shiver, Kim McGuire, and Brayden Banks at NFPA in Orlando.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Rob Ross and Jamie Knowles.

National Association of State Fire Marshals

In July, Rob Ross, Vehicle Systems Applications Engineer, and Jamie Knowles, Industry Relations Manager, attended the National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM) Symposium in Kansas City. "Amerex supports NASFM because of its dedication to public safety," says Jamie. "The top-down thought leadership and approach to problem-solving are impressive. NASFM is critical in the fire protection industry because of how it is actively seeking out solutions to the biggest challenges we are facing now and could potentially face in the future."

Amerex Named Vendor of the Year by Koorsen

Amerex was honored to be recognized as vendor of the year by longtime partner Koorsen Fire & Security at its annual conference. Billy Findley, Vice President of General Products and Pre-Engineered Systems at Koorsen, states that there are many characteristics they consider when selecting the recipient, but the main two are product availability and vendor support.

“When we place orders and are able to receive the product we need in a timely manner, it is a huge benefit to our business,” he says. “Supply chain issues can happen, but when they do, Amerex is always quick to communicate with us.”

Additionally, Billy and his Koorsen colleagues value their relationship with Jeff Roeger, Regional Sales Manager—Midwest, and the Amerex team. He adds that Jeff always goes above and beyond for them. Jeff is always willing to travel to branch locations, assist the purchasing department or meet with customers, if needed.

Jeff values the relationship between Amerex and Koorsen, stating, “I cannot imagine having a better, more cooperative relationship with a company than we have with Koorsen Fire & Security. All parts of our companies work together to ensure each other’s success.

Their loyalty to the Amerex brand is treasured by everyone here. They are truly a most valued partner!”



LEFT TO RIGHT: *Billy Findley, Jeff Roeger, and Keith Koorsen.*

Congressman Gary Palmer Visits Amerex

Amerex recently welcomed Congressman Gary Palmer and 18 members of his staff. Congressman Palmer represents Alabama’s 6th District. During his visit, we held discussions about the fire protection industry and proudly took him on a tour of our facilities and through

an Amerex Defense Crew Automatic Fire Suppression System Fire Test. We appreciate visits like this to highlight the importance of our industry in the protection of our people and property, not just in our communities but for our country.

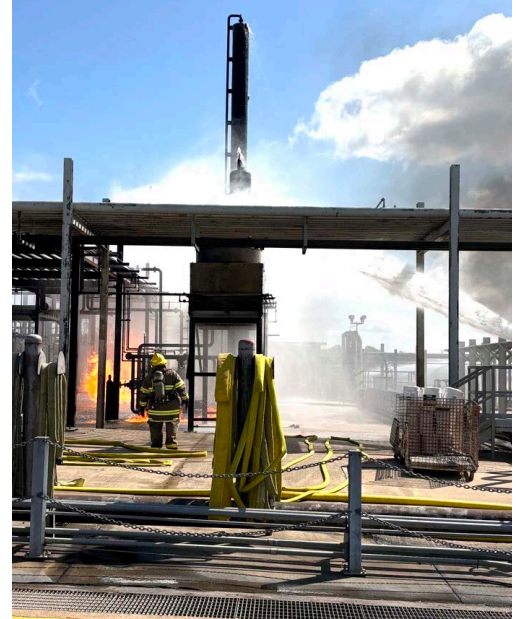


Amerex Team Visits TEEX

Several members of the Amerex team had the opportunity to visit the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) for the Fire School Instructor event. After a tour of the facilities, we joined our partners at Dooley Tackaberry at BigShots Golf for an evening event. 🌟



LEFT TO RIGHT: Kim McGuire, Susan Ray, Wade Tilley, and Ben Pitts.



employeeSPOTLIGHT

Change and Growth in Kitchen Fire Suppression Sales



While Amerex has been in the business for more than 50 years, the kitchen protection line of the company’s fire suppression systems is still in the early stages of its expansion, shares Mike Powell, National Accounts Director. “Being in this stage gives us a great opportunity to shape it and work with our partners to evolve it in real time,” he says.

Mike has recently taken on the responsibilities of kitchen systems sales and is eager to be a critical part of the expanding growth opportunities in the kitchen system space for both Amerex and its business partners.

“Mike’s considerable experience in foodservice sales and operations management paired with his strategic sales approach set us up for success in this area of our business,” says Ben Pitts, Vice President–Sales and Marketing. “His focus on working through our regional sales managers to meet the foodservice and hotel chains, kitchen hood manufacturers, and our distribution network where they are has been an important part of our expansion into the KP Market.”

When talking with Mike about what he sees as he looks to the future of the KP line, he shared that there are four key advantages to choosing Amerex:

1. Amerex has a stronghold in the domestic supply chain for this product in the industry, with its products

being designed and manufactured in the United States.

2. Amerex is willing to collaborate with customers to update the engineering for some of the new high-energy appliances that are coming to market.

3. The Amerex customer success, sales and technical teams provide outstanding support to customers.

4. More than 70% of the parts that go into the Amerex KP fire suppression systems are also used in our industrial systems. From an inventory perspective, this is a considerable advantage to our distributors. Mike says if the pandemic taught the business world one thing, it is that no one wants to be a single source on a critical life safety product, such as fire suppression.

In addition to investing in engineering, Amerex is committed to boosting its training schedule to meet the demand for increased education around these products as well as the requirements for specific certifications in the industry. To support this effort, Amerex is developing a new training site and has brought in Joe Knighton as a training specialist to support the team.

“We are being onboarded by some of the largest hood original equipment manufacturers and global restaurant chains,” Mike says. “We are also engaging with Foodservice Consultants Society International to educate them on fire suppression. This approach is the best way we can support our large distribution network.”

Amerex is excited by the opportunity for growth in the kitchen protection space and hopes you join us in congratulating Mike on his expanded role. His expertise and passion will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the restaurant and fire distributor communities.

New Training Specialist



This past spring, we were thrilled to welcome Joe Knighton to the training team as our new Training Specialist. Joe has been part of the industry since the beginning of his career, with his first job being a firefighter for the United States Air Force. After completing his military career, he took a position with a distributor

in Oregon as a fire extinguisher technician. He eventually expanded his role to fire protection system service and installation.

After spending years servicing and installing Amerex systems, he transitioned to sales and sold fire protection products—covering Oregon, Washington and Idaho—before moving into a management role.


“As soon as I saw the opportunity to work with Amerex and David Rice, I knew I wanted the job,” says Joe. “I used to sit in David’s classes and imagine how great it would be to have a job like his. I aspire to be as good as he is.”

Joe’s background will be an incredible advantage in his new role, where he will divide his time between training those in the transit industry on system maintenance and instructing Kitchen Protection (KP) classes. Since his start, Joe has spent most of his time in the field with David and Rob Ross, Application Engineer with the Vehicle Systems Program. He shares that he’s enjoying getting reacquainted with Amerex from the inside. One element he’s especially proud of is that Amerex products are American products.

“Joe has hit the ground running,” says Susan Ray, Marketing Director. “He has already taken on a full transit training schedule—and he’s already receiving positive reviews from industry technicians. Joe joining with David Rice enhances our already outstanding training program.”

What’s made it a great start for Joe is that he says working with the Amerex team is easy. He can always rely on his colleagues to share the essential product- and training-related information he needs to be successful. Whether it’s tech or sales support, he says people throughout the company are always ready to help.

Joe is fond of scooters and classic cars, so when he’s not leading a training course or in training himself, he’s working on his small farm with his wife, Nikki. Joe and Nikki have had many great adventures throughout their lives, and they enjoy dreaming about what’s next for them while they are on long drives. Joe’s two sons and three grandchildren are often part of their plans. He also feels fortunate to be able to spend time with his parents, who live near him.

We know you will enjoy learning from him and hope you join us in welcoming Joe to the Amerex team. 

AFIL Is Now a Ranger Fire and Security Company

Earlier this year, AFIL Ltd. embarked on a significant transition, joining the growing Ranger Fire and Security group. This strategic move not only aligns with Ranger's expansive trajectory but also marks a new chapter for the company, now rebranded as AFIL Ltd. Steve Evans Jr., a key figure in the company, shares his insights into this transformation and the enduring partnership with Amerex.

A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE The relationship between the Evans family and Amerex dates back to the late 1980s when Steve's father, Steve Evans Sr., began testing Amerex equipment in the United Kingdom and across Europe, ensuring every piece of equipment met the rigorous standards of the company and the different international requirements for the partners he was distributing to. He was then employed by the Amerex branch in the U.K. and served as the Technical Director of the company.



ABOVE: Steve Evans Jr.

Steve Evans Sr. worked closely with the U.S. headquarters of Amerex, and the partnership solidified when Amerex was sold to McWane in 1999 and Steve Sr. acquired AFIL.

"It was a natural transition; my father had already been around Amerex products," Steve Jr. says. "And, therefore, we became a licensed master distributor, partner and representative for Amerex Corporation on this side of the pond."



AFIL RECEIVES ROYAL RECOGNITION One of the crowning achievements of Evans' work was obtaining the Royal Warrant of Appointment from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 2009. This prestigious honor allowed the company to use the Royal Arms in connection with its business, a testament to the quality and reliability of Amerex products.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Steve Evans Sr. and Andy Halasz at the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Coronation Festival, June 2013, in the gardens on Buckingham Palace.

“In 2012, for the royal Diamond Jubilee celebration, Amerex put on a trade show at Buckingham Palace,” Steve says. “Other businesses with a royal warrant were there, like Aston Martin, Barbour [a fashion brand] and Johnnie Walker whiskey, so we’ve done some really cool stuff with Amerex.” He notes other “cool stuff” included expanding the business into India and working with the U.S. team at INTERSCHUTZ, the largest international trade fair for rescue services, fire prevention, disaster relief, safety and security.

AFIL is currently reapplying for the Royal Warrant under King Charles, underscoring its ongoing commitment to excellence.



AFIL received a Royal Warrant of Appointment from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 2009.

A NEW CHAPTER AND UNWAVERING COMMITMENT

In January 2024, the company took a pivotal step by joining Ranger Fire and Security, a rapidly expanding group in the U.K. The rebranding to AFIL Ltd. was a natural progression, reflecting the new ownership while maintaining the strong heritage and reputation built over decades.

“Ranger is on a massive growth curve, and by the time they finish, they’ll probably be in the top three in the U.K.,” Steve notes.

The collaboration aims to leverage Ranger’s scale

“ We know there are more opportunities and markets to address, and hopefully—because Ranger is a bigger vehicle—we can do it in a bigger and better way. ”

while preserving the unique identity and operational integrity of AFIL.

Despite the change in name and ownership, the core of AFIL’s operations remains unchanged. “So, our new name, it wasn’t a long trip away from where we were,” Steve says. “At the end of the day, nothing has changed. It’s mostly back-office stuff, like accounting software. And that was part of the reason why we chose to move forward with the Ranger Group because they weren’t going to eviscerate the original company—just basically add some post-sale and some critical mass to the whole thing. We’re going to leave all the staff, all the management and everything in place.”

The partnership with Amerex continues to thrive, with AFIL serving as a crucial hub in Europe to ensure Amerex’s high standards are maintained, and their products are well represented across international markets.

A PARTNERSHIP BUILT TO LAST The relationship between AFIL and Amerex has stood the test of time and is driven by mutual respect and shared goals. “It’s proved itself over the last 35+ years, and we want to continue to go in that direction,” Steve says. “They’ve got a big headquarters down in Alabama, and we’ve got eyes and ears on this side of the pond.”

This strategic partnership opens new opportunities for AFIL to address markets they couldn’t reach before, ensuring a promising future. “We know there are more opportunities and markets to address, and hopefully—because Ranger is a bigger vehicle—we can do it in a bigger and better way,” he says.

As AFIL continues its journey with Ranger Fire and Security, the continuity and strength of this partnership are central to AFIL’s ongoing success and growth. The company’s commitment to quality, innovation and strong partnerships remains unwavering. This transition marks an exciting new chapter, poised for growth and new opportunities, all while honoring the legacy of excellence that defines the Amerex brand. 🌟

NEW LEADERSHIP,

LEFT TO RIGHT:
Mark Lewis and
Alex Hydrick.



SAME QUALITY BEHIND THE DIAMOND

The production team at Amerex Corporation has been a cornerstone of our operations for decades, due in part to the tireless dedication of Jeff Layfield, who retired recently after an impressive 47 years of service to our company.

Mark Lewis and Alex Hydrick, who both have a longstanding tenure at Amerex, have stepped in to lead the team, bringing a wealth of experience and fresh perspectives to carry Amerex forward.

While their collective years of experience make it feel as though these two need no introduction, Mark and Alex have been working more behind the scenes—on strategic planning and long-term sustainability—rather than on daily production goals. Read on to learn more about their journeys at Amerex and what this transition means for our company and customers.

FROM MAINTENANCE TO MANAGEMENT: Alex Hydrick's Journey



Alex Hydrick, Senior Fabrication Manager, has been with Amerex for 23 years, starting his career in the maintenance department as a multicraft mechanic. “I moved into a leadership role on the second shift for maintenance and then transitioned into the quality department, where

I spent about ten years,” Alex explains. His path continued through various production roles, ultimately leading him to his current position. “At the end of last year, our leadership, Jeff Layfield, retired. Mark and I took on dual responsibilities as senior production managers.”

“ One of the highlights of my day is getting to walk around and talk to people, figuring out how we can make things better. ”

Alex’s extensive background in maintenance and quality has equipped him with a unique perspective on production management. “One of the highlights of my day is getting to walk around and talk to people, figuring out how we can make things better,” he shares. His passion for the people he works with and his commitment to continuous improvement are evident in every aspect of his role.

A LIFELONG COMMITMENT: Mark Lewis' Story



Mark Lewis’ journey at Amerex began in 1985, just after graduating high school. “My high school best friend’s father, who worked here as the vice president, offered me a summer job,” Mark recounts. What started as a temporary position evolved into a lifelong career spanning nearly

four decades. Mark’s roles have ranged from front line production to coordinator and eventually to where he is now, Senior Assembly Manager.

“ This place is more than just a job, it’s family. ”

“What’s kept me here is the people and the opportunities for growth,” Mark says. His deep-rooted loyalty to Amerex and his colleagues is evident. “I met my wife here, and Alex also met his wife here. This place is more than just a job; it’s family.”

A UNIFIED VISION FOR THE FUTURE

With Jeff’s retirement, Mark and Alex have divided responsibilities, with Alex managing the raw materials departments and Mark overseeing final assembly. Despite their distinct areas of focus, they work closely together. “Mark’s office is right next to mine. We talk all day every day

making plans and sharing ideas on what we need to do to make things better,” says Alex.

Mark echoes this sentiment, highlighting the complementary nature of their skills. “Alex’s maintenance background lends a lot to me, especially when it comes to equipment. He’s able to help me with some things, and I hope I help him with some things and, you know, maybe together we can come up with a mostly intelligent answer to whatever the issue or concern is.”

Their shared goal is to ensure that the quality and delivery of Amerex products continue to meet the highest standards. “We want to have a positive impact. Things won’t stay the same. Status quo is not where we want to be,” says Mark. As they look to the future, both are committed to fostering a culture of continuous improvement, forward-thinking and collaboration.

“Jeff has left us a lasting legacy through the people he’s worked with, like Mark and Alex,” says Jay Ghelani, Vice President of Operations. “While we miss him, we know we set ourselves up for success after his retirement. Right now, our team is the best it has ever been. I hope, just as I am, he would be proud of how we are moving forward.”

ADAPTING TO CHANGE AND EMBRACING CHALLENGES

New equipment implementations and high product demand have brought new challenges that have highlighted the resilience of their teams. It is in situations such as these where their history with the company shines through. “We’re here to lead our team through any hurdles they may face,” Mark says. “Alex and I have been through similar situations before. We know that with perseverance, we’ll come out stronger.”

Their approach to leadership is rooted in supporting and developing their team, especially their new production managers. “Our goal is to grow them into the best managers they can be, with their own ideas and perspectives—not to be the next Mark and Alex,” says Alex. “We need their ideas, not just ours.”

LOOKING AHEAD

As Mark and Alex step into their new roles, they carry forward the legacy of dedication and excellence established by Jeff Layfield. “You know, yesterday is gone,” Alex says. “But the theory and the tutelage of Jeff—we both

“ We’re not just thinking about today or tomorrow. We’re planning for the long term, ensuring that Amerex continues to thrive for years to come. ”

grew up under him—have not. We still have those values. We still have that drive to want the company to progress the way he did. Now, we have more tools at our disposal. Technology has changed. Automation has changed. The way we can measure quality has changed. We are focused on continual improvement.” Their combined experience, complementary skills and shared vision for the future put them in a good position to lead Amerex into a new era.

“We’re not just thinking about today or tomorrow,” Mark says. “We’re planning for the long term, ensuring that Amerex continues to thrive for years to come.”

Their story is a testament to the enduring values of loyalty, commitment and continuous improvement that define Amerex. As we move forward, we are confident that the manufacturing team will continue to excel and drive our company’s success under Mark and Alex’s leadership.

A CONVERSATION WITH MARK AND ALEX

Want to learn more about Mark and Alex and their vision for the future? They shared more about their career journeys, insights into the Amerex production operations and more in a recent podcast. 🎧



Watch here.



AMEREX DISTRIBUTORS—AND PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS—BRING EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE TO THE BUSINESS OF FIRE PROTECTION.

FIGHTING FIRE with FIREFIGHTERS



(SKILL, KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE)



LEFT TO RIGHT: *Brennen Lawson, Donna and Rodney Lawson, and Emily Mullins.*

EMILY MULLINS, Vice President, Fire & Safety Equipment Company *Concord, Virginia*

Emily Mullins grew up in a family of first responders. Her father, Rodney Lawson was a firefighter for Concord Volunteer Fire Department and a fire marshal for Campbell County Public Safety. Later both Emily and her brother Brennen followed Rodney into public service, with Brennen serving as a firefighter and paramedic for Campbell County Public Safety and Emily volunteering as a paramedic. In 2003, her parents—Rodney and mother Donna Lawson—purchased Fire & Safety Equipment Company, which had been founded in 1968.

Emily started working for the company at 18 and figured she would one day take over the business. She received her bachelor’s in business administration from Liberty University while also getting her paramedic certification. While working for the family business, she volunteered for the Concord Rescue Squad. “That’s how I met my husband,” Emily says. Travis Mullins is a retired Concord volunteer firefighter who now works in the company with Emily.

“ The bottom line is the quality and the consistency—it’s the best product line on the market. ”

EMILY MULLINS

Today Fire & Safety Equipment Company services more than 2,700 accounts—including fire departments—

with 30 employees providing products, services, and training for fire extinguishers, fire suppression systems, fire brigade supplies, and all varieties of first aid equipment. The company’s Amerex partnership existed before the Lawsons bought the company more than 20 years ago. “It’s always been Amerex,” Emily says. “The bottom line is the quality and the consistency—it’s the best product line on the market.”

“Our experience and knowledge help us to understand the needs of our community and our customers,” Emily continues. “People trust that we know what’s best in fire and life safety equipment.”



LEFT TO RIGHT: *Travis, Dylan, and Tobey Sicard, with shop dog, Cinder.*

TOBEY SICARD, President, D&M Fire & Safety Equipment *Fairfax, Vermont*

Tobey Sicard’s father was a firefighter, so as a 16-year-old high school student, Tobey started as a volunteer firefighter in his Vermont hometown. “I didn’t like mainstream school, so when I graduated, I went straight to New Hampshire Tech and got my degree in fire science and fire investigation,” Tobey says. Graduating with honors, Tobey went to work for the Burlington Fire Department (BFD).

When Tobey was just 20, a driver in his father’s company had a fire safety business that he was selling. Tobey decided to buy it, so his father retired, became his co-owner, and helped run the business while Tobey worked 24 hours on and 48 hours off at one of the busiest fire departments in the Northeast. Tobey retired from BFD after 25 years as a captain on Engine 1.

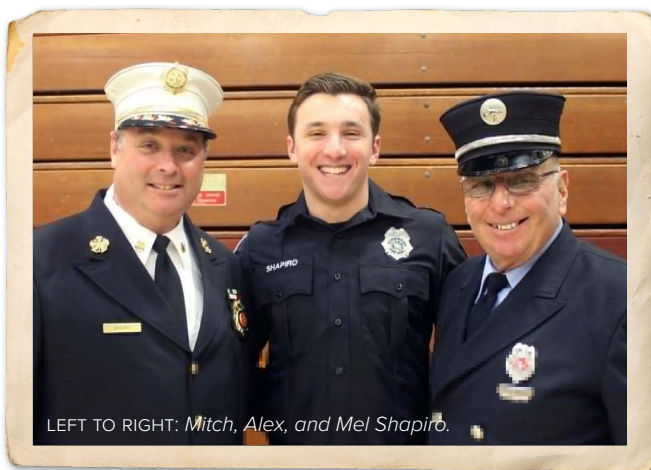
“ We have a direct line of communication with Amerex. ”

TOBEY SICARD

D&M has partnered with Amerex since 2002. “We like that their products are made in the U.S.A. and when you have questions, you pick up the phone and talk to the people who make the products,” Tobey says. “We have a direct line of communication with Amerex.”

Tobey and his six employees, most of whom are firefighters, work throughout Vermont, upstate New York, and northern New Hampshire providing sales, service, and training on all manner of fire suppression systems, fire extinguishers, and clean agent suppression systems. “We hire active firefighters because they have the skills and knowledge to help our customers,” Tobey says. “Our experience gives our customers an added benefit without added cost. As we perform inspections, we also offer education and training on how to properly operate equipment.”

For years in Vermont, the fire protection market was dominated by an Amerex competitor. Tobey and his staff at D&M built Amerex’ reputation in the state. “Our company has made Amerex the gold standard here,” Tobey says.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Mitch, Alex, and Mel Shapiro.

MITCH SHAPIRO, President, Shapiro Fire Protection Company Warminster, Pennsylvania

Mitch Shapiro grew up with a father who was a volunteer firefighter. His father Mel also owned a gas station but



LEFT TO RIGHT: Mitch and Mel Shapiro.

decided he wanted to do something else. After going to work for someone else and realizing he enjoyed being his own boss, Mel started his own business servicing fire extinguishers for local businesses in 1981. Mitch started helping his father in the business while he was still in middle school.

In 1986, after graduation, Mel asked Mitch to come to work for him officially. “I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do, so I started working for him right away,” Mitch says. “He didn’t type or use a computer, so I did all of the invoicing and accounts receivable.” In 1987, Mitch followed his father into the fire service as a volunteer with the Warminster Volunteer Fire Department, where he still works today and has served as volunteer chief for 18 years.

“ We are a proud Amerex distributor because of both of our commitments to quality and professionalism. ”

MITCH SHAPIRO

Mitch’s son Alex is now the third generation of the family in firefighting. Alex wanted to start with the department in high school, but Mitch wanted him to wait. Unbeknownst to Mitch, Alex applied to volunteer. “When Alex’ application came through, I thought ‘well I guess he’s in it now,’” Mitch recalls. Alex played college baseball at Philadelphia University (now Jefferson University) and went through fire school all while continuing to work for the family business. When Alex graduated with his marketing degree in 2019, he joined the family business full time while also serving as a firefighter for Chalfont Fire Company.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Mike Spinazola and his son Zachary Carter, who started law school this fall.

“ We really like Amerex products ... They stand behind their stuff, and we like that they’re made in America. And we can always get in touch with someone when we have questions. ”

MIKE SPINAZOLA

Shapiro Fire Protection is a family-owned and -operated business with 12 employees that serves southeastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware with a full line of fire safety equipment. “Almost every employee is also a volunteer firefighter,” Mitch says. “Our experience as firefighters gives our customers a much better understanding of fire protection and fire prevention. Our customers benefit from our wealth of knowledge and additional training because of our experience using the products in real-world situations.”

Shapiro Fire Protection has been dealing with Amerex from the start. After purchasing Amerex extinguishers from a company in Philadelphia, Mitch and his father wanted to get their own distributorship. “We wanted our own distributorship so we could control our own destiny,” Mitch says. After several years of discussions, they became an Amerex distributor. “We are a proud Amerex distributor because of both of our commitments to quality and professionalism,” Mitch says.

**MIKE SPINAZOLA, Owner, FireSafe Corporation
Woburn, Massachusetts**


When Mike Spinazola was a teenager, he witnessed a school in his neighborhood burn down just a mile from his house. “I rode my bike to the fire and was fascinated

by the firefighters and the profession,” he recalls. After graduating high school, Mike got his EMT certification and went to work for a small ambulance company.

Mike went on to graduate from Middlesex Community College and moved to Needham, Massachusetts, and became a dispatcher there to increase his odds of being hired by the Needham Fire Department (NFD). “At that time, you had to live in the city where you served,” Mike says. He was hired there and stayed as a firefighter in Needham for 18 years.

While working for the ambulance company, Mike had started working for another fire safety company, but in 2003, Mike started FireSafe with Reggie Wildfong. FireSafe, and their three to five employees, exclusively services portable fire extinguishers. “It keeps us busy,” Mike says. Today, two of Mike’s children also work for the company. “We like to keep it the family,” he says.

FireSafe became an Amerex distributor five years ago. “We really like Amerex products,” Mike says. “They stand behind their stuff, and we like that they’re made in America. And we can always get in touch with someone when we have questions.”

After two decades in business, Mike knows that his company is a resource for their customers. “Our customers trust us because they know firefighters own the company.” 

Amerex Is Everywhere!

Thank you to everyone who entered our contest. We had so many great entries that it was hard to select a winner. Below is our winner and a few honorable mentions.

WINNER



Glacier National Park, Montana

We install and service extinguishers in the park, and the goats came out to help the technicians this year.

Heidi Morton;
Summit Fire & Security

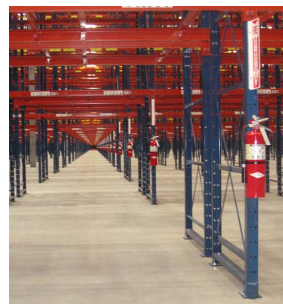
HONORABLE MENTIONS



Sable Island

This extinguisher was spotted on a National Park Island when doing my inspections. Sable Island is a thin crescent of shifting sand located at the edge of the Continental Shelf, 290 km southeast of Halifax, Nova Scotia. Home to the famous Sable Island wild horses, grey seals, and unique plants, birds, and insects. Known as “The Graveyard of the Atlantic” due to the more than 350 shipwrecks off its shores.

Josh McDonald; Halifax, NS



Grocery Warehouse,
San Bernardino,
California
David Bergman;
Orange, CA



Muscle Shoals Sound
Studios
Muscle Shoals, Alabama
Rod Reisner;
Birmingham, AL

events 2024–2025



EVENT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	DATES
KP, Strike, IS Training	Ontario, CA	Sept. 9–10
MINExpo	Las Vegas, NV	Sept. 24–26
KP, Strike, IS Training	Allentown, PA	Oct. 1–2
VS Training	Allentown, PA	Oct. 3
Int Only KP—(en Español)	ONLINE ONLY	Oct. 15–16
KP, Strike, IS Training	Kansas City, MO	Oct. 21–22
Int Only KP	ONLINE ONLY	Oct. 29
KP, Strike, IS Training	Dallas, TX	Nov. 12–13
VS Training	Dallas, TX	Nov. 14
TSD Conference	Frisco, TX	Nov. 15–16
KP, Strike, IS Training	Trussville, AL	Dec. 3–4
VS Training	Trussville, AL	Dec. 5
2025		
NAFEM	Atlanta, GA	Feb. 26–28
NAFED	Las Vegas, NV	March 6–7
NAFED	Atlantic City, NJ	April 10–11
STN Expo East	Charlotte, NC	March 20–25
WastExpo	Las Vegas, NV	May 6–8
NAFED	St. Louis, MO	May 8–9
NFPA	Las Vegas, NV	June 16–18

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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