



## WATERJET CUTTING

# GRACE UNDER PRESSURE

By Lynn Stanley

*Above: StainlessDrains maximizes productivity with two waterjet cutting heads powered by the KMT PRO-III 90,000psi, 125hp pump.*

### **Drain manufacturer stair steps growth, doubles throughput with two cutting heads at 90,000psi**

**October 2016** - When it comes to business, John Henry puts first things first. Educator and businessman Stephen Covey described “first things” as the three or four items that matter most to an individual. For the CEO of Caddo Mills, Texas-based StainlessDrains.com, those things are God, the company’s employees and its equipment—like the KMT Waterjet pumps that keep the manufacturer’s waterjets humming 10 to 12 hours a day.

“First things” is also about excellence. “To build a company you have to have quality and service,” says Henry. “That’s a given. When you can deliver those things and keep costs low, you create a value proposition that is a win-win for your customer and for you.”

KMT Waterjet’s ultra-high pressure pumps are doubling throughput for StainlessDrains, which has enjoyed exponential growth since Henry purchased the company in 2006. That same year, Henry named Vice President of Sales Shelia Heller a minority owner.

First-year gross sales totaled \$2 million. Since then the company has enjoyed an average annual growth rate of 18 percent year over year through 2015. This year looks to be another record year for StainlessDrains which has already landed contracts with 300 new customers.



*Cutting with the KMT PRO-III 90,000psi has lowered operating costs while doubling production.*

The manufacturer maintains heavy repeat business. New customers find StainlessDrains primarily through the Internet and word of mouth. It's online catalog and its configurator—which allows customers to virtually design/build their own drains complete with a 3D rendering—can call up more than 100,000 drain products, some 200 accessories and approximately 400 fittings.

The manufacturer also custom fabricates drains, going from concept to prototype to delivery, in 10 to 15 working days. Its products meet FDA standards for antibacterial, anti-contamination and anti-corrosion performance characteristics. StainlessDrains' diverse customer base includes Campbell Soup, Dr Pepper, Pepsi, Nestlé, Sara Lee Bakery, General Mills and Frito-Lay. StainlessSteel is a preferred vendor for Costco, Coca-Cola and the Cheesecake Factory.

### **Building a niche**

"Drains make up 95 percent of our business," says Henry. "Forty percent of that is custom work. A small percentage of jobs include fabricating items like mezzanines, stainless steel door frames, wall protection curbs and other miscellaneous items." Says Heller, "We're a unique niche."

The company remains committed to quality and service. "Some people think custom means expensive," Henry notes. "We offer value-engineered solutions for a cost-competitive price." StainlessDrains' investment in KMT pumps allows the manufacturer to control quality, service and just-in-time delivery.

"Other companies in our business outsource their products and have long lead times," he continues. "They can't guarantee quality because they can't control it. Our waterjets and pump systems allow us to rely on ourselves to produce U.S.-made products. We don't have to depend on outside services."

A World of Concrete trade show in 2010 introduced StainlessDrains to KMT's Streamline SL-V 60,000psi, 100hp pump. Henry's past experiences with the reliability and flexibility of KMT Waterjet's equipment made the investment decision easy.

The company installed a waterjet system with a KMT SL-V 50 pump in 2006. "A year later, we changed out the table for a 5 ft. by 12 ft. bed but continued to use the SL-V 50 pump with it," he says. "That pump is still running great after almost 10 years."

In 2014, the manufacturer purchased a dual-head KMT Streamline PRO-II 90,000psi, 125hp pump. KMT Waterjet recently retrofitted the pump with its new PRO-III technology. "We made major changes to the pump's intensifier or what we call the topworks," says KMT Marketing Manager Bob Pedrazas. "Our engineers have developed a new patented metal-to-metal seal design and a patented metal canister that protects the UHP seals. The SUPRALife seals improve uptime and increase productivity because the topworks design makes a predictable maintenance schedule for the seals possible for the first time. We were able to retrofit StainlessDrains' PRO-II in just a couple hours. We can also retrofit our PRO I series pumps. It's a new evolution in waterjet pump technology and it allowed StainlessDrains to take advantage of the latest technology without buying a new pump."



*StainlessDrains fabricates a complete line of standard and custom corrosion-resistant drain products using grade 304 & 316 alloys.*

## **Power under pressure**

The PRO-III 125hp pump features two IDE [0.011 orifice] cutting nozzles with pressure at 90,000psi. Cutting with two nozzles allows StainlessDrains to double productivity, reduce operating cost and use of abrasives by cutting products in half the time of conventional 60,000psi 50hp waterjet systems, Pedrazas says.

StainlessDrains, which also serves big box retailers, breweries and restaurant chains, uses its waterjet systems to cut everything from saw blades [A-36 steel] 1 in. thick and 4 ft. in diameter to logos on signs and 1/4-in. slotted grates or trench plates. “We cut a lot of thinner stainless—14, 12 and 10 gauge, 1/4 in. and 1/2 in. primarily,” Henry says. “We use the waterjets to cut standard drain products as well as custom. We keep the waterjets moving. If they aren’t cutting custom parts, they are cutting inventory parts.”

Shop Supervisor Josh Hitchcock says the KMT PRO III SUPRALife seals allow him to work uninterruptedly and boost the bottom line. “Now we have a seal that is guaranteed to run 500 hours,” Hitchcock says. “This pump is like a Formula One car. It can go real fast for a long time with less downtime.”

Cutting with two heads allows Hitchcock to double production. “For me, it’s about speed,” he says. “If I can keep my speed up cutting, I can run eight hour shifts instead of overtime to get caught up. I’m dropping overtime, I’m dropping a light bill, I’m lowering operational costs—I’m thoroughly happy.”

“You are only as good as your people and your machinery,” asserts Henry. “KMT Waterjet is part of that partnership. It’s so important to have a good relationship with your supplier. KMT Waterjet has bent over backwards for us and they stand behind their equipment.”

StainlessDrains is always searching out new technology and ideas, and is readying several new products featuring patented technology for commercial launch this year. Henry is also looking to invest in a 5-axis waterjet to enhance cutting capabilities.

“We’re problem solvers,” he says. “We don’t turn anything down.” **FFJ**

## **SOURCES**

- **KMT Waterjet Systems Inc.**  
Baxter Springs, Kansas  
phone: 620/856-2151  
[www.kmtwaterjet.com](http://www.kmtwaterjet.com)
- **StainlessDrains.com**  
Greenville, Texas  
phone: 888/785-2345  
[www.stainlessdrains.com](http://www.stainlessdrains.com)