

MEMBER IN FOCUS: MAINE SEPTIC

By Toni Seger, ProseWorks™

There's probably nothing more fundamental to personal or corporate infrastructure than the health of your septic system and there may be no industry in which it's more important to see a 'green' approach. So, it was exciting to visit Maine Septic & Pumping and learn about entrepreneurial developments that have the potential to transform an entire industry and protect the environment at the same time.

The founder of Maine Septic, Kathy Rae Emmi, grew up as part of a family construction business that focused on excavating and also handled septic, but she never dreamed she would own a septic business. "In 1980, when I entered college, I was focused on ski racing," says Kathy who attended college in Colorado on a ski scholarship and shows me dramatic photos of herself flying down the slopes.

Kathy started college studying environmental biology, and then switched to business administration. Both would come in very handy in her future. "I knew I wanted to run my own business, but I didn't know which business it would be." After methodically pursuing numerous avenues like helping her brother, Wayne, manage the Mount Washington COG Railway which he bought while she was still a student to handling national sales of technical software to non-profits, Kathy decided she was ready to launch her own business. In 1996, she created Maine Septic as a sales outlet for her brother, David's company; Presby Environmental, Inc.

Kathy's always had a strong interest in the environment and she wasn't the only family member thinking that way. Presby Environmental is a corporation dedicated to innovative and cost effective wastewater treatment technologies that are environmentally sound. Additionally, almost all of the products Presby Environmental offers were invented by David himself. The ingenious technology of Presby Environmental represents the cutting edge in wastewater treatment today. It requires less space, lasts longer and costs less. When was the last time you heard that combination?

"In our systems, custom designs are only limited by the creativity of the system designer", says Kathy happily. "We enjoy solving problems." Because the design components are more adaptive than conventional systems, the Presby Enviro-Septic® systems can fit more easily into challenging locations like steep slopes or odd shaped lots. Enviro-Septic® also offers the ability to treat wastewater to near drinking water standards which means they can be safely installed near water bodies and other sensitive areas. With their greater flexibility, these systems can blend into the natural contours of a site which can also eliminate the need for expensive retaining walls and/or large amounts of back fill.

When such inventive products are applied to commercial applications, the savings can be huge. As an example, for a McDonald's Restaurant in Alton, New Hampshire located on a relatively small lot at a traffic circle, a Multi-Level

Enviro-Septic® or a series of stacked fields resulted in a system that was one-sixth the size of a traditional stone and pipe system.

David Presby's inventions always seek to improve on existing wastewater treatment. To illustrate, a standard septic tank can allow as much as 60 percent of suspended solids to escape, but when the Presby Maze® is inserted inside a tank, it traps suspended solids that could otherwise overload the bacterial surface of a leach field and cause premature failure. Instead, the Maze's mesh panels provide a large surface where helpful bacteria can grow and solids are more efficiently broken down.

Recently, Hebron Academy had six of the 'Presby Maze' installed. This allowed their leach fields to be up to 35 percent smaller for a whopping cost savings. The fields are environmentally safer and will last longer. The maze folds flat and can be easily transported on top of a tractor trailer load of piping and, yes, their piping is made with recycled plastic.

Presby's new denitrification system is nothing less than revolutionary. Passive and low in cost, the system requires little to no maintenance or monitoring for more than 20 years while it returns liquid to the groundwater that exceeds the quality standards required by EPA. The need for denitrification isn't new. Nitrates can cause oxygen depletion which kills marine life and the growth of undesirable algae. What Presby's De-Nyte™ accomplishes, however, is far more thorough for residential applications and less expensive than anything previous. This patent pending product is currently available in New Hampshire with more approvals expected as ongoing testing continues to prove its treatment abilities.

Kathy was so excited by her brother's inventions, in 1996, she borrowed a trailer to deliver 1200 feet of piping to fulfill her first order. By 2000, her husband, Michael "Nino", decided to sell the Mexican restaurant he'd owned for 16 years and purchase a pumper truck so their business could expand to include service and septic inspection as well as sales. Today, Maine Septic & Pumping provides 'state of the art' septic inspections using Camera Eye technology.

This equipment can locate below ground systems and spot problems before they manifest on the surface which makes Camera Eye a big aid in realtor transactions.

Kathy says her mission is to educate home owners about waste treatment so their systems will last longer and perform better. She's seen everything flushed through a system from cigarette butts and candy wrappers to heavy grease and the entire contents of a hot tub. "We've been called in when vacationing property owners lose their fields because their toilet leaked all winter and they didn't know it until spring. Another advantage of an Enviro-Septic system is you can actually rejuvenate it. When a conventional system fails, it must be replaced, but you can revitalize aerobic bacteria in an Enviro-Septic field. That means, some of the worst disasters can actually be recovered from."

Kathy Rae Emmi is a "people person" who wants to get an important message out. "Malfunctioning and improperly installed septic systems are a health hazard. Proper installation and maintenance are critical to protecting Maine people and Maine waters."

For more information about products, dealers and every aspect of this critical subject, visit www.MaineSeptic.com or call Kathy at 207-782-5940.



Kathy Rae Emmi

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