

Vendor Profile

SAVY & SONS



For Savy & Sons, teamwork is the pipeline to success



Savy & Sons credits the whole team with propelling the company's innovative approach to success.

You may never see Savy and Sons' best work, but they wouldn't have it any other way.

This family-owned business has spent more than 50 years repairing and rehabilitating underground pipes and infrastructure. And thanks to their investment in advanced technology, much of their work barely leaves a mark.

Ralph Savy (below) and his brother Travis faced challenges early in their careers at Savy & Sons.



"A lot of the infrastructure we do, it's trenchless, meaning our goal is not to dig up the ground, but to do things robotically, and...you need the specialty tooling," says co-owner Ralph Savy. "So consequently, we've invested in that equipment and technology to be able to do that. It's allowed us to be easily the best in our sphere. We're commonly doing things that other companies can't do."

And their close-knit, dedicated team does a lot — water and wastewater rehabilitation, coatings and linings, infrastructure restoration, pipe-lining services and media blasting for commercial, municipal, and educational customers. Quite a list for a company that started out counting its employees on one hand.

"My grandfather founded the company in 1972," Ralph said. "It was just him and a couple of guys — small for lots of years. Then my father, Ralph Jr., went to work with them."

Their customer base was quite different then. "My grandfather and my father did all new construction

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

Vendor Profile

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

...new underground infrastructure, catch basins, inverters and storm water and wastewater...new housing developments, because they were booming."

After Ralph's father passed away unexpectedly in 2007, Ralph and his brother Travis took over the company with a view toward growing it. They quickly faced one of the biggest challenges of their careers.

"Then 2008 happened; the bottom fell out....We never lived through a recession before, so we didn't even know what happened. Long and short, we started calling the customers like, 'Hey, did we do something wrong? You guys have any work for us?' They're like, 'Man, do you guys see the news? ...We got no work.'"

The brothers didn't wait to find out if "business as usual" would return. "We had to pivot, and we started going to work anywhere we could get work just to stay afloat," says Ralph. "Then we ended up pivoting from new construction infrastructure to now fixing the old infrastructure. So we went into rehabilitation, and that's what we really laser-focused on — fixing our old, deteriorated infrastructure, mostly underground. So we're doing coatings, linings, linings of pipes, fixing things without digging, trenchless technology."

That new approach paid off. Even existing customers with no new construction needed to maintain their current infrastructure. "[If we were] used to working with municipalities [on] new construction...we now would reach out to that municipality direct and say, 'Hey, listen, we could fix your old stuff.' So we retained a lot of the same customers — but we've acquired thousands of new customers."

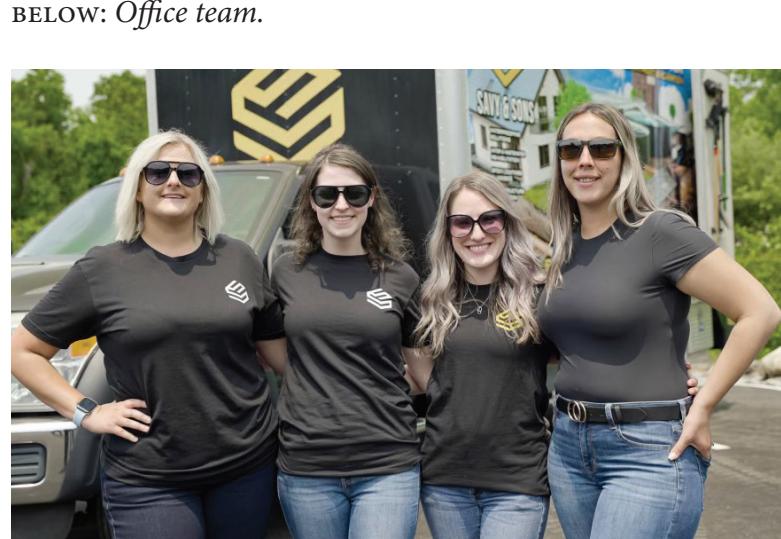
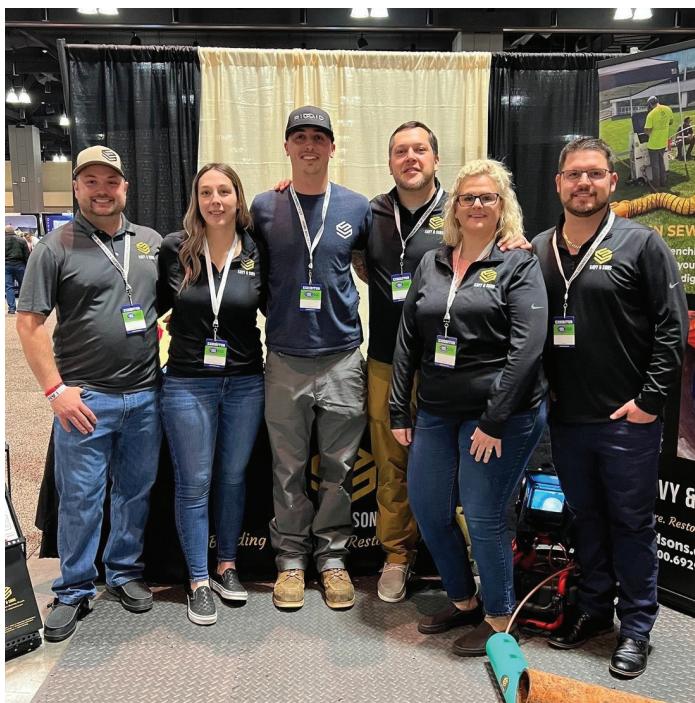
Fixing existing infrastructure kept Savy and Sons working and, eventually, growing. "A couple of guys, maybe a subcontractor, helper here and there, all the way from 2007 until 2018, and then we purposefully started growing the company in 2018. Currently to date, we're 31, 32 employees and continuing to grow every day."

Central to the company's success is its team orientation, says Ralph. "It's a twofold advantage. One is the culture....Everybody's pulling for one another, helping one another. Then on the other side, it allows us to be nimble. We could pivot. We're very much a team environment, solutions-oriented. We encourage people to bring ideas to the table. How can we make things better, more efficient? You don't get that in a corporate setting.

"One of our biggest strengths is just our culture, and obviously that culture leads to the team, and then that attracts the same type of team members. So I just want to give a big shout out to my team. Because none of this is possible without the team. All the way from the people behind the scenes in the office, to the people in the field, front lines doing the work. We have a very, very tight-knit culture, family culture, helpful culture. You're

The team prepares to install a liner.





never going to hear something like ‘that’s not my job.’ That will never be uttered in our walls.”

And as Savy and Sons’ team culture provides a foundation for success, the technology provides the cutting edge. “You’re continually investing in new technology and growth, and there’s always the latest and greatest. The technology is always getting better.

“It’s like adding tools to the toolbox, so to speak. Just like any trade, really. Yes, you have your bulk of your

tools, but there’s always something that comes out that can help you do that same job better or more efficiently, and that’s where we’re not afraid to forward-invest when we see the value.”

An example is the robot-assisted method of relining a compromised pipe. “The easiest way I explain it is—we put a new pipe inside the old pipe. Think of [a] sock. When you take your sock and you fold it inside

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25

Vendor Profile

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

out—that's exactly what we do with the liner. We basically start the liner, it gets folded inside out, and it's inverted up the pipe with air. So the folding happens from air pressure and it basically blows it up the pipe, and then we cure it off with either uv or steam, or hot water." The result is a newly lined pipe—with virtually no ground-level disturbance.

But while Savy and Sons doesn't shy away from investing in new technology, the brothers never lose sight of safety as a priority.

"The biggest challenge in the industry and our biggest strength, which is really what separates us, is confined space," says Ralph. "A lot of these projects require confined space. You're going down into manholes, you're going down into vaults, you're going down into catch basins, you're digging a small 4x4 access pit that's 20 feet into the ground and building a custom shoring. Stuff like that.... If you're not an expert in that thing, it's very, very dangerous."

"We're not only experts in it, but we forward-invest in the safety. We're doing regular training and refreshers, and the whole field team is in the shop, and the safety company comes in, and we do real demos. We take the time to make sure our team is safe and everybody goes home at the end of the day."

The same dedication applies to environmental hazards.

"One of our big advantages is we're HAZWOPER 40 certified. Basically that's your hazardous material certification. That's a standard certification for all our guys, [which is] a rarity in the industry. I've never heard of another company that requires that. All of our techs have that, whether they're just starting out or they're a seasoned technician.

"Also on the debris-disposal side — how do you handle this stuff properly? How do you store it properly? Then how do you dispose of it properly? It's knowing the right companies, knowing the right partners, the local laws, the regional laws, the state laws, because it's all different wherever you go," says Ralph.



Safety first: Suiting up for an underground job.

"We just did a job for [a local casino], and they have what's called TOSHA. It's your tribal safety. These guys were super-thorough. Layers upon layers. This took a month of planning with our project management and technical team. When we finished the project, their exact words were, 'You guys are literally the best contractor we have ever worked with. Your safety is amazing. Your planning is amazing. You guys are clean, you're organized, you're thorough. The work was great.'

"That's the type of customer we love and value because they're not looking for the cheapest price. They're looking for a professional company that's going to do their job the right way and keep their team safe and our team safe and get the job done right." 